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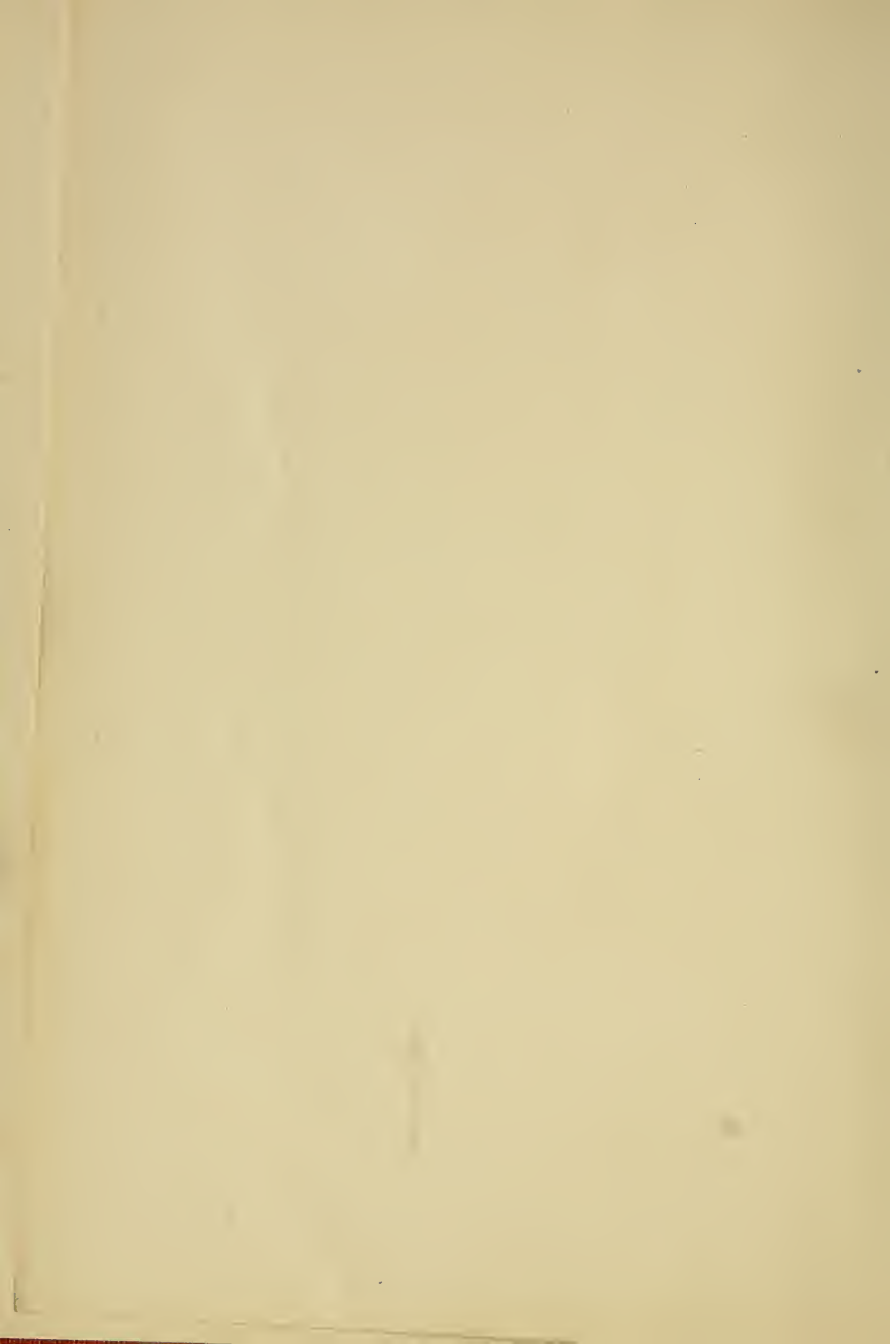
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# SPEAKING AND WRITING ENGLISH

A COURSE OF STUDY FOR THE EIGHT GRADES OF  
THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WITH PRACTICAL  
SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING COMPOSI-  
TION AND A FULL SET OF COM-  
POSITION STANDARDS

BY

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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS

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CHICAGO NEW YORK BOSTON  
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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS Course of Study was originally published in pamphlet form, under the present title, for use in the public schools of Lawrence, Massachusetts. The first edition was printed in October, 1915. So great a demand for the book followed that a second and a third edition were exhausted within a little over a year from the date of the first appearance. The publication of the work in regular book form is in response to a persistent demand for the Course from superintendents and teachers who have urged that it be made permanently available for their use.

Several new chapters have been added to Part One in the present edition. These, for the most part, are taken from the author's "Suggestions for the Improvement of Written Composition," published privately in January, 1917. Careful revision of other parts of the work has been made, wherever the results of the thorough trial of the plan in Lawrence have seemed to justify it. In the work of the primary grades considerable new material of practical value to teachers has been inserted. The number of illustrative compositions has been considerably increased. The grade "standards" are made to conform to the results of the author's continued first-hand study of children's capacity for growth in oral and written expression under this scheme of composition work. These changes mark no departure from the original aim and method of the plan. They merely serve to make both clearer to the teacher.

In the writing of this Course ideas and suggestions from many sources were freely drawn upon. Especial obligation is due to the excellent Course of Study in Elementary Composition prepared in 1913 by the Department of Public Instruction for the State of

New Jersey under the direction of the then Assistant Commissioner, George A. Mirick.

Before the actual writing of the Course was begun, three years ago, its general plan was discussed for many months with my friend and former associate, Mr. John J. Mahoney, at that time assistant superintendent of the public schools of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and now principal of the State Normal School in Lowell, Massachusetts. Our plans to become joint authors of the work were, for no fault of his or mine, never carried out. In the introduction to his recently published "Standards in English" he makes a gracious reference to me. I am sure it was not more cordially made than is my acknowledgment of his genuine helpfulness to me in this and many another piece of professional work undertaken together.

Finally, I wish to express my great indebtedness to Miss Leila M. Lamprey, my associate in Lawrence, for her invaluable assistance in the preparation of this book. It is Miss Lamprey's choice always to share the labor and never to share the praise. I cannot let her part in making this book go unacknowledged.

BERNARD M. SHERIDAN.

LAWRENCE, MASS.

September 18, 1917.

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## PART ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### THE PROBLEM OF SPOKEN AND WRITTEN ENGLISH IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LANGUAGE is by all odds the most important subject in the curriculum. It is, also, for many reasons the subject that is most difficult to teach. There has been an almost entire lack of standards for the teacher to go by. The language habits in the home and on the street are generally not good. There is so little "linguistic conscience" among grown-up people that it is difficult to arouse any in little children. These difficulties have been enormously increased in recent years by the influx into many communities of large numbers of non-English-speaking peoples, with the result that in many schools the teaching of English is no longer the teaching of the mother tongue, but the teaching of a foreign language.

The purpose of this course of study is to help the teacher to meet the elementary language problem more effectively and more hopefully. A few things it aims definitely to do:

- (1) To replace vague, uncertain, and sometimes too ambitious aims with a purpose clearly defined and reasonably possible of achievement.
- (2) To prescribe limits within which the elementary work in language is to be confined.
- (3) To emphasize the teaching of oral language, both for its own sake and for its value as a foundation and preparation for written language, and to formulate a systematic and pro-

gressive plan of teaching this most important and much neglected side of English composition.

(4) To construct tentative standards of achievement for each of the eight elementary grades, in both oral and written language, which it seems reasonable to expect the majority of pupils to reach.

The lack of a clear and definite limitation of the work to be covered in language teaching in the elementary school has been responsible for much of the waste which has attended the teaching of the subject. Courses of study have called for more than could possibly be accomplished. The requirements have been too many and too vague. Many things have been taught that should have been postponed to the high school, since they do not appeal to the needs or the capacity of the stage of development of the ordinary elementary school pupil. Pupils who leave the elementary school before completing the course will be better off for having been taught *a smaller number of things thoroughly* and for having had *abundant practice in these few fundamental things*.

The kind and amount of language training in the elementary school should be largely determined, it seems fair to say, by the answers to the following questions :

1. What are the common language needs of people in everyday life?

2. What specific language habits can the school cultivate which will most usefully meet the demands that will be made upon the boy and girl at the end of their elementary school course?

3. What capacity for oral and written expression is possessed, or may with reasonable effort be acquired, by ordinary children in the different grades?

In the light of such a study of children's language needs and capacities, the following would seem to be a reasonable and workable aim for the elementary school :

1. *To turn out pupils able to stand before the class and talk for a minute or two upon a subject within the range of their knowledge or experience, speaking plainly, in clean-cut sentences, and without common grammatical mistakes.*

2. *To turn out pupils able to write with fair facility an original paragraph upon a subject within the range of their experience or their interests.*

Such a paragraph should show :

1. *An absolute mastery of "the sentence idea."*
2. *Freedom from glaring grammatical mistakes.*
3. *Correct spelling of all ordinary words.*
4. *Unfailing use of the commonest marks of punctuation.*
5. *Some evidence of attention to matters of sentence structure and to the choice of words.*

### SPOKEN ENGLISH

It is much more important that the elementary school should give pupils *ability to talk well* than it is that it should give them *ability to write well*. This is simply because people talk more than they write. Few people write much, but all people talk a good deal. People who write for a business may write a book or two in a year. Most people talk enough in a single week to fill a book. Graduates of the grammar school are seldom put to a test of their knowledge of arithmetic or history or geography. But their spoken English is in evidence every day of their lives. Very often their success in business and in their intercourse with other people depends upon their power to speak well. Yet the school has made a good deal more fuss over "the comma in a series" than it has over the spoken English of its pupils. Mumbling speech, the absence of any sure sentence control, gross grammatical errors, and a vocabulary as bare as a bone have been characteristic of the spoken English of altogether too many grammar school graduates.

There are several reasons why our pupils do not learn to talk well :

(1) There is not enough of oral language work, as a separate and distinct training, in the elementary school.

(2) Oral work is not utilized as much as it ought to be as an aid in, and a preparation for, written work. The child who is to be taught to write well must first be taught to talk well.

(3) The other school subjects are not utilized as effectively as they might be to develop power in oral composition.

(4) The common method of the recitation furnishes little motive for the pupil to talk well. Very rarely has he the sense that he is addressing an audience with the purpose of saying something worth while. Most of the things he recites, and some of the things he reads aloud, have very little interest for him. When he recites, he recites to the teacher, and much of what he says is lost to the pupils who sit behind him. When he reads, he reads to the teacher with the audience behind his back ; or, if he stands in front of the room, he reads to an audience whose every eye is following the words he is reading. Since he is conscious of no real need to speak clearly and distinctly, that his fellow pupils may hear, he does not take the trouble to do so.

(5) The school has perpetually to fight the bad influence of the language environment in which many pupils spend their out-of-school hours.

(6) The school makes the mistake of thinking it can correct bad habits of speech by the application of the rules of grammar. The ability to talk correctly comes from practice and not from the study of rules. The speech of children and of grown people is full of errors because they have not *formed the habit* of talking correctly. There is a big difference between knowing *how* to do a thing and *doing* it. It is not mere *knowledge*, but *habit*, that we want. Pupils may *know* the right form and out of two forms presented to them by the teacher, one right and one wrong, invari-

ably name the right form. Yet in the very next recitation they will use the very form which they condemned a moment before. Most teachers have heard the old story of Johnny and the past participle of the verb "to go"; how the teacher punished him for repeated offenses by requiring him to stay after school and write "I have gone" fifty times; how upon the completion of the task (in the absence of his teacher from the room) he wrote at the bottom of his paper: "Dear Miss —, I have wrote 'I have gone' 50 times and I have went home." Habits of years cannot be rooted up in a minute. To get a habit thoroughly rooted in a child's life takes careful drill and constant repetition. The errors of speech cannot be corrected by *writing* the correct form. It must be said and heard over and over again, until the ear becomes accustomed to it and accepts it in place of the wrong form which it had before accepted as the right one.

These matters receive attention, over and over again, in the pages that follow. It is not thought necessary at this time to do more than state them.

An effective course in oral composition should include the following essential things:

- (1) Much opportunity for free self-expression.
- (2) Constant attention to matters of voice, enunciation, pronunciation, and inflection.
- (3) The training of children, by constant practice, to compose oral paragraphs upon simple themes, and the development, through these, of some elementary skill in selecting, arranging, and expressing their ideas.
- (4) Unremitting efforts in all grades to eliminate the common errors of speech.

(1) The child's free self-expression is developed best by drawing upon his own personal *experience*. That is what the youngest



pupil knows best and can talk about best. Reproduction has to do largely with what lies outside of the personal experiences of children, with things that they do not really know. Memory is the principal factor here. Experience has little to do with it. It is, therefore, the least profitable field for children's free expression, and should be sparingly used.

(2) The "schoolroom voice" has long been a term of reproach. Teachers may not be able to improve the quality of their pupils' voices, but they can do a great deal toward getting pupils to speak in an easy and natural tone of voice, which will still be audible not only to the teacher, but also to the pupils in all parts of the room. In addition, constant attention should be given, day in and day out, to matters of clear articulation, correct pronunciation, and right inflection. By making the conditions of the recitation such that the pupils get the feeling that they are *actually talking to one another* with the intention of imparting information, or opinions, and not merely "reciting" to the teacher to prove they have learned their lessons, the speech of children would greatly improve in these respects. But no matter how favorable to good talking the schoolroom conditions are made, pupils ought to have throughout the entire course systematic training through special exercises.

In an appendix will be found lists of some of the most common defects in the enunciation of children and some exercises designed to remove them. The exercises printed there are meant only to be suggestive. Teachers will doubtless be able to supplement them by many others of their own. There is, however, enough material in the printed drills, if they are diligently used, to turn in the right direction the careless tendency so manifest in the speech habits of children.

(3) Oral composition, as the term is used in this course of study, means a great deal more than ordinary talking or conversation, which as often as not is fragmentary and disconnected. By oral composition is meant a body of connected speech, *large enough in scope to demand attention to its structure and form*. All the quali-



ties that are to be developed in the written composition may be, and ought to be, developed first in the oral exercise: choice and variety of words, quality and variety of sentences, and arrangement of sentences in a paragraph. This development will, of course, be slow and gradual. But there will be no improvement at all unless children are habituated from the first to be critical of their spoken English, in so far, at least, as the more flagrant mistakes in syntax are concerned, and the more fundamental matters of sentence structure and use of connectives.

This course of study provides for much practice in composing oral paragraphs and gives many suggestions for teaching children how to acquire the art of developing interesting oral themes on subjects within the range of their interests and experience. Numerous examples of oral compositions, drawn from the actual work of pupils, are given under every grade.

(4) The habit of correct speech cannot be gained from a study of grammar. Good habits or bad habits of speech are pretty well fixed before the child studies grammar and before he could possibly derive any benefit from a study of it. Good English is mastered by practice, not by rule. It is of little use for the children to know principles or rules. They may spend a week learning the rules for the agreement of the verb with its subject, but rules will not prevent them from saying "he don't." But if they are made to repeat "he doesn't," "he doesn't," "he doesn't," alone or in concert, in as many sentences as can be made by talking as fast as they can for five or ten minutes, the correct form will finally begin to sound right. It is not *knowledge*, but *habit*, that counts in speech.

In this course of study an attempt has been made to allot to each grade a number of common errors for correction. Naturally such a distribution is more or less arbitrary. That certain errors of speech are listed under one grade and not under another does not imply a failure to realize that all of the errors are committed by pupils in all the grades, or that the correction of them in one

grade will make it unnecessary to fight against the same errors in succeeding grades. The chief object of allotting the correction of certain errors to certain grades and that of certain other errors to other grades is to focus the attention of both teachers and pupils upon a relatively few points, for which they will be held accountable.

The "language game" has been found to be one of the most effective methods for teaching right forms of speech, particularly in the primary grades. By means of these the child is brought frequently to use the correct forms in a natural manner and under conditions which appeal strongly to him. In an appendix a number of these games will be found, prefaced by an interesting analysis of the common errors of children's speech, based upon a systematic study conducted by the teachers of a city school system during the whole of a school year.

## WRITTEN ENGLISH

### IN GENERAL

When the pupil comes to put on paper what he has to say, the situation becomes complicated by the entrance of factors which were not present when he was expressing himself orally. He must think about his penmanship. He must watch his spelling. He must look out for his capitals, his punctuation, his indentions, and all that. These things become automatic, or nearly so, after years of training and practice; so that educated men and women are required to give little or no thought to their penmanship, spelling, punctuation, and the other technicalities of written expression. But the child is at first obliged to think of all these things all of the time. By degrees, however, with reasonably good instruction and sufficient practice of the right kind, the observance of the simpler requirements of written technique becomes habitual to him, so that by the time the pupil has completed the elementary school course, he ought to be fairly free

from the necessity of giving conscious attention to the mechanics of written language.

Added to the mechanical difficulties of written expression, there is present, also, at the moment of writing, a self-consciousness which tends to check the spontaneity which characterizes his oral efforts. In the case of children this is no doubt partly due to the demands made upon them by the technique of written expression (penmanship, spelling, capitals, punctuation, and so on), all of which, because they have not yet become matters of established habit, are a constant drain upon their attention, and act like brakes upon the relatively free and easy delivery of their ideas which characterizes their spoken language. Thought has a stronger and closer association with speech than with writing; and even adults, whose penmanship and spelling and punctuation have become matters of second nature, requiring no conscious attention during the process of composition, find their expression slowing down the moment they put pen to paper. Written expression is of its very nature slower, more deliberate, more careful, and, therefore, more productive of self-consciousness than oral expression. But with children it is probably true that the chief difficulty which written language at first presents over oral language is the attention which has to be given to the technicalities of writing, the penmanship, the spelling, the punctuation, the use of capitals, and matters pertaining to the arrangement of the composition on the paper.

Strictly speaking, penmanship and spelling are not matters of language technique at all, since they are not developed primarily through written language. The school program provides separate drill for both. The failure to use capitals correctly and the simpler marks of punctuation (the period and the comma) is accounted for not so much by the supposition that these things are difficult in themselves as it is explained by the lack of careful training in oral language. The child who is trained from the first to speak in clear-cut sentences will after a while acquire such

a strong sentence sense that he will seldom, if ever, write as a sentence a group of words that is not a sentence. Pupils write in the classroom as they have been accustomed to talk in the classroom. Failure to use capitals and periods in written composition is largely due to bad oral habits. If children do not possess the sentence sense, their written work is sure to contain many omissions of capitals and periods, and consequently many misuses of the comma. The teaching of written language, so far as *correctness* goes, offers but few difficulties over and above those which are met with in the teaching of oral language.

There is, of course, more than mechanical correctness to be sought in written composition. There must, in addition, be some attention paid in the upper grades to sentence structure and to some of the other rudiments of style. For this purpose, the careful and deliberate written exercise, giving opportunity for thought, for studied revision, and finished workmanship, is a more effective vehicle of instruction than the oral exercise, which must of necessity be less thoughtful and structurally less excellent. *Still, the teacher should never forget that the basis of all good written work is laid in good oral work, and that if oral work is neglected her efforts to produce good written language will be in vain.*

Written composition, then, so far as the mechanics of writing is concerned, does not offer so many difficulties as the teacher has been inclined to attribute to it. But the few things that are required in the way of written technicalities must be mastered as early as possible in the course, so that these difficulties will not stand too long in the way of the freedom and spontaneity of the child's expression. So long as his attention is distracted from the thought of what he wants to say by thinking of his penmanship, his spelling, his punctuation, and similar matters of written technique, his composition is likely to be formal and meager and uninteresting. On the other hand, it would be folly to attempt to cultivate freedom of expression by allowing children to write regardless of the rules of punctuation, spelling, arrangement, and

the like. These matters of written technique (and we are dealing with only the simplest items of them in this course of study) should not, during the process of writing, hold the center of consciousness. They should occupy only the "margin" of consciousness, as we say. But before they can be safely relegated to the margin, they must first have occupied the center of consciousness for some time. Children do not possess intuitively habits of correct written expression. These must be built up from the day that written language is begun in the second grade. The important thing, and the difficult thing, is to give sufficient drill on the mechanics of written composition, without killing the child's spontaneity and his freedom of expression. Drill on the mechanics of written composition there must be, from the very start. At the same time, the teacher must be extremely cautious not to let her insistence upon correct form kill the child's desire for self-expression. Form must be taught, and in the process content must not be sacrificed. This is a task that calls for all the wisdom and all the ingenuity of the teacher. It is the real test of the good teacher of composition.

## ONE-PARAGRAPH COMPOSITIONS

At the outset of this discussion the statement was made that the lack of a clear and definite limitation of the language work in the grades below the high school has been responsible for a great deal of the ineffectiveness of our teaching, and the following general standard was there set up as a reasonable measure of attainment in written composition for the ordinary graduate of an ordinary grammar school:

*"The ability to write with fair facility an original paragraph upon a subject within the range of his experience or his interests, using sentences grammatically complete and correctly punctuated, with correct spelling, and free from grievous grammatical mistakes."*



This standard has the merit of being tolerably definite and reasonably possible of attainment. Later on in the course of study, under assignment of work by grades, there will be found paragraphs written by children, which have been adopted as tentative standards for the different grades.

The chief reason for limiting the written exercise *to a single paragraph* is to assure sufficient practice in writing which a longer composition makes impossible, and to focus the attention of both pupil and teacher upon the smallest possible language field. In addition to the opportunity it affords for practice, the single paragraph is admirably suited to the purposes of teaching elementary composition. It is a complete unit, a whole composition in miniature. It gives free range to development of sentence structure. It may illustrate all the forms of discourse: narration, description, exposition, argument, as the four chief kinds of writing are technically known. It is subject to all the laws of discourse. By its use the child gains a practical knowledge of every important feature of literary workmanship. The child need not be conscious of these things. But the teacher should think of them all the time.

The children in the lower grades will not, of course, be expected to produce a paragraph. In the first grade, children will make a sentence or two with alphabet cards, first from sentences written on the board by the teacher, and later will construct one or two original sentences, based mostly on their reading lessons. By the time the pupil has reached the third grade he will be taught to cast his sentences into the form of a paragraph. This paragraph will at first be short and simple. It will grow in length and in organization of thought during each succeeding year of the elementary school course. But in the highest grade it should not exceed seven or eight sentences.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING THE PARAGRAPH SHORT

If you count the number of sentences in the eighth-grade "standard" paragraphs printed in this Course of Study (see pp. 143-145) you will find that it in no case exceeds seven. Some of the paragraphs contain only five sentences. From five to seven fairly formed sentences are enough for the sort of eighth-grade paragraph we should attempt to train our pupils to write. Teachers must rid themselves of the mistaken notion that a seven-sentence paragraph does not give sufficient room for a grammar school child to write something interesting. A paragraph does not need to be long in order to be interesting. There is really no relation between the length of a composition and the degree of its interest. It would be interesting to know how many teachers are getting longer paragraphs that possess the directness, the simplicity, and the genuine childish feeling exhibited in the examples of oral and written paragraphs printed in this book. The writer has read ten thousand one-paragraph compositions in the last two years, and has invariably found the most interesting ones among the short, pointed, spirited paragraphs on some bit of childish experience.

It is not a question of whether children *can* be trained to write longer paragraphs or compositions of more than one paragraph, although no large proportion of the teachers of the country have yet demonstrated that it can be done. The writer believes that even if it were possible to train all the children in the grammar grades to write a long composition and write it well, it would be a waste of time to do it. When half the pupils in every school system in the country can write as good paragraphs as those printed in this book as "standards" for the different grades, it will be time to look around for more worlds to conquer.

## SUBJECTS SHOULD BE PERSONAL, DEFINITE, AND BRIEF

A good subject is half the battle. Children cannot be expected to write upon a subject about which they know little and care less. You cannot get blood out of a turnip.

Subjects should be chosen within the range of the pupil's knowledge and interests. Children like best what they know most about, and they love to write when they know what they are writing about. There is all the difference in the world between "having to say something and having something to say."

Knowledge and interest, therefore, are necessary conditions for good work in composition. Children's lives are crowded with incidents; they have plenty of ideas and opinions which they are eager to express. Every child who is not feeble-minded has something worth saying if he is given a decent chance to say it. From their life at home, in the streets, in school; from their sports, amusements, duties, tasks; from the things they have seen and heard and felt and done; from the things they read and the things they imagine,—from all these may be drawn an almost endless variety of subjects, full of the breath of life and the actuality of experience.

Some children, of course, are less keen in their observation than others, and all children need to have their eyes opened and their wits sharpened to see interesting themes in the incidents and experiences which make up their daily life. To teach children to observe closely and to think clearly and consecutively is one of the chief values of training in composition. In handling subjects drawn from everyday life there will be need at first for the teacher to exercise skill in keeping the children's compositions from becoming trite and trivial. This she can do by training children to discover interest in common things, and by suggesting a live manner of treatment. Nothing in the world is commonplace unless we make it so.

Besides being *personal*, subjects should be *definite* and *brief*. "How I Spent My Vacation" is concrete and personal; but it lacks the second essential of a good subject: it is neither definite nor brief. It is impossible for any child to write in an interesting manner upon such a subject *within the limits of a single paragraph*. At best, it can be no more than a bare catalogue of events. Within the compass of any vacation, long or short, there are a score of incidents and experiences exactly suitable for narrating or describing in the written paragraph, because they give opportunity for striking and vivid detail; but to ask a child to set down in a single paragraph the doings of a whole vacation is to foredoom him to failure. The subject of "Birds" is another example of the too large topic. It has the quality of being concrete, and if the pupil to whom it is assigned knows something of birds at first hand, it has for him also the quality of being personal. But what child, no matter how well he knows the birds, can put anything of himself into a single paragraph on the general subject of "Birds"? "The Oriole's Nest," on the other hand, offers a specific theme for his knowledge, and he can treat it adequately in an ordinary paragraph. Better even than "The Oriole's Nest" would be a single phase of that interesting bit of bird life, — such as the location of the nest, or its architecture, or its special adaptation to the use of this bird of the golden plumage and the golden voice. A child's paragraph on "A Trip on a Trolley Car" is not likely to produce much beyond a record of routes and running time. If, instead, the pupil should write a paragraph describing a Sunday school party starting out in the morning for a picnic, and a companion paragraph about the same party's return from the picnic at night, hot, tired, limp, and generally out of sorts, he would stand a vastly better chance of writing something worth while.

Children must be taught, therefore, to *narrow their subjects*. This focuses thinking, and establishes a *single point of view*. They must be trained to single out *some particular point*, and work that up for all it is worth. Unless this is done, children will inevitably

write paragraphs that contain a little of everything and nothing much of anything.

The following are by no means extreme examples of the "scattering" type of paragraph :

Last Sunday my mother and I decided to Canobie Lake. We reached the lake half past eleven. As dinner time approached, we ate our lunch. About two o'clock we went into the show. As we wanted to reach home for supper we went out of the theater half past four. While waiting for the car a thunder storm arose. It lasted three quarters of an hour and half past five we took the car for Lawrence. We reached home just in time for supper.

One afternoon about two o'clock I heard the fire alarm ring. I followed the fire engines until they stopped at a three-story house on Valley Street, in the Italian district. They quickly extinguished a slight chimney fire, and the "all out" was sounded. As I was coming over the carbridge hill, I saw a large touring car run into a coal-wagon. The driver of the coal-wagon was seriously injured, and the automobile was damaged to a great extent. As I was about to get on my bicycle again I noticed that a piece of glass from the broken wind-shield of the auto had stuck in the tire and punctured it. I was obliged to walk home, and in all thought it was a very eventful afternoon.

The following pair of compositions, written upon the same subject by two pupils in the same room, illustrate very effectively the difference between the paragraph that covers too much ground and the one that selects *a single point* for "elaboration" :

### FIELD DAY

On Wednesday afternoon the pupils of our school were to line up by sixes in front of the building. We marched from the school to Riverside Park. Each school had the first letter of the school on top of the bleachers. First thing we had to do was to salute the flag, then sing the "Star Spangled Banner." We had great fun up there

cheering for our school. The events were as follows — running, dancing, basket ball, overhead ball, and many different folk dances, which were spoiled by the rain. There were only three more events and those were the 300-yard dash and potato race.

### FIELD DAY

At the Field Day recently held at the baseball park for the grammar schools, I was particularly interested in a solo dance given by a girl of our school. Her dress, tied to her wrists by knots of pale blue ribbon, looked like great wings as she ran out. She did the dance exceedingly well and fully deserved the applause given her by her classmates and others.

This point is discussed and illustrated more fully in the chapter on “The Single Phase Idea” (p. 26).

### GOOD AND BAD SUBJECTS ILLUSTRATED

The subjects in the two columns below are typical of the kind that are *not* suitable to any kind of composition, and particularly not suitable to the one-paragraph composition which this scheme of composition aims to train children to write.

#### NOT PERSONAL

Lions.  
Rain.  
The Cynic.  
Blossoms.  
The Weather.  
Autumn.  
The Pyramids.  
In October.  
Disobedience.  
The Red, White, and Blue.  
Water.  
A Radiator.  
June.

#### TOO LARGE

The War.  
A Long Trip.  
A Week's Enjoyment.  
An Eventful Day.  
Last Vacation.  
Field Day.  
A Day in the Woods.  
A Trip to Revere Beach.  
Week-ends in Camp.



The topics in the left-hand column might have been copied from a composition book of forty years ago, when formalism ruled all school work, and when writing compositions was a question of "having to say something" instead of "having something to say." It was that sort of thing that killed composition then, and it will kill it now just as surely as it killed it then.

Similarly, no child can possibly write an interesting paragraph on any such subject as those listed in the right-hand column. At best such a composition can be only a string of unrelated events. The too-large subject will be dealt with at some length in the succeeding chapter.

The following pairs of compositions show what a world of difference there is between a composition written upon a subject *personal to the child* and one that is *not personal*. They are reproduced exactly as they were written.

#### PAIR NO. 1.

##### TO-DAY

To-day it is raining.  
I have no coat.  
But I will not get wet.  
I have an umbrella.

##### FLAG DAY

To-day is Flag Day.  
The first flag was made by Betsy Ross.  
It was made June fourteen.

It is not difficult to decide which of these two compositions is the more interesting. The little fellow in the first one is talking right out of his heart. It is genuine self-expression. If anybody is talking in the second one, it is the teacher. It certainly is not the child. The facts recited are perfectly true, but there is no self-expression in a statement of facts. Facts can be *interpreted* in a highly interesting way, but not by children.



## PAIR No. 2

## CHILDREN'S DAY

Sunday is children's day. We have to say many things. I will shiver while I am saying them.

## THE BUTTERFLIES

The butterflies are very pretty. They have wings of many colors. There are many different kind of butterflies.

Can there be any question as to which of the above children is being trained in self-expression? The first child spells "shiver" wrong, but she is expressing an almost universal human experience, and a very poignant one. Most of us have "shivered" in the same way. The second one could hardly be more impersonal, if she were writing about the dodo. One has a right to wonder if she ever really *saw* a butterfly.

## PAIR No. 3

The Flower I like best is the Violet. There is three colors of them. There is the violet the white and the yellow.

## A BASEBALL OUTFIT

Last Saturday I sent away to Chicago for a mit, a mask, and a protector. I hope my outfit will come Saturday. When I get them I will dress up and see how I look.

Here is another striking contrast. The violet person, one suspects, knows as little about flowers at first hand as she knows about grammar. But the boy who is waiting for that package to arrive from Sears Roebuck captures us from the start.

## PAIR No. 4

## HAVERHILL ROAD

Haverhill Road is a very long one. On one side of the road is a car track. Along the other side many kinds of flowers grow. On Sunday there are many people walking on this road.

## A TENT

Once I built a small tent. It was just big enough for myself. One day my brother squeezed in after me. The tent burst.

In spite of the many people who walk on the Haverhill Road on Sundays there is hardly a human thing about the paragraph. The only thing not human in the second one is the use of "burst" for "busted."

## PAIR No. 5

## MY NEW DRESS

My mamma is making me a new dress.  
It is blue. It has a lase ve at the neck.

## MY RIBBON

I have a new ribbon. I have it on.  
My sister has one to.

These two paragraphs show that it does not *necessarily* follow that the selection of a personal subject will in all cases result in an interesting composition. The chances of its being interesting are vastly increased by the choice of a subject that is personal. But, after that, the child has to learn to say what he has to say in a way that will interest others. The little girl who is going to have a new dress with a lace "V" at the neck interests us, — if, for nothing else,

perhaps, because so few dresses nowadays have anything at the neck. She is going to "look lovely," we are sure, in her little blue dress. But the girl with the new ribbons gives us no chance to see anything or feel anything. She has just a new ribbon, and her sister has one "*to*." What do we care about her sister!

Here are two upper grade compositions. Both tell, or pretend to tell, of an early summer morning. In the first one the sun is "shinning" (as usual) like a mass of gold, and the sky looks like an American flag, and the breeze is so very, very gentle that the giant trees feel compelled to bow down before it, and the birds sing their sweetest songs — and more bromide of that sort. The author, in spite of her raptures, is not a nature lover; she is a nature fakir. One has a right to doubt whether she ever gets up in the morning until she is called a second time. The other morning is a real morning. The paper has its faults. There is some exaggeration of language in it, as there is in the first one. But it is genuine self-expression.

### A SPRING MORNING

As I look from my room window I could see that the beautiful sun was shinning. It looked like one mass of gold away up in the sky out of everybody's reach. The white clouds sailing across the sky looked like great sailboats. The sky looked like the blue field in the American Flag and the clouds the stars. The air was so fresh and the breeze was so gentle and light. The trees looked like large giants bending in the breeze. The birds sang their morning song. Everything was so bright, calm, fresh and sweet.

### CIRCUS MORNING

As the sun came up over the hills, I stealthily crept down the front stairs. I often realized that the steps creaked, but this morning they seemed to creak all the louder. Of course, as I opened the front door, it had to make a long, drawn out shriek. I was glad

when I reached the sidewalk, for I was afraid the folks would hear me. All went well after that, except the work. I reached the circus grounds, along with a few other boys. Then started the grewsome task of carrying water to the horses and elephants. But I was to be rewarded for my work, for as I made my way home, I had in my possession the coveted ticket to the gorgeous performance in the afternoon.

### A WORD ABOUT TITLES

The title ought to indicate as pointedly as possible what the paragraph is about. The following are examples of titles that are too general and vague, or weak and wordy.

Where I Went.  
 What I Heard.  
 What I Did.  
 What I Saw.  
 What I Can See.  
 Where She Was.  
 Sunday.  
 An Adventure.  
 To-day.  
 My Trip.  
 Work.  
 The Tree.  
 A Soldier.  
 To Boston.  
 My Experience.

An Experience.  
 A Walk.  
 A Description.  
 The Book.  
 My Friend.  
 Where I Was Invited to Go.  
 Where I Went Friday Night.  
 What There Should be in  
     Every Room.  
 What My Aunt Has.  
 What Happened to My Dear  
     Loving Brother.  
 Where I Went Last Year on  
     My Vacation.

A good title should be (1) brief, (2) to the point, and (3) attractive, — in the sense of arousing interest or anticipation or curiosity. Thus, "We Have With us Tonight" is the very clever title of a book containing a selection of toasts, ready-made introductions, stock after-dinner speeches, etc. Such a title as "A True Account of the Doings of Five Quadrupeds and Three Birds".

would have killed the sale of one of Ernest Thompson Seton's best books. But he didn't name it that; he named it "Lives of the Hunted."

Children cannot be expected to phrase titles skillfully without training, and I have serious doubts whether it would pay to spend the necessary time in such a "refinement" of our business. I question if any titles should be written in the primary grades. It would seem wiser not to write any, than to write the kind that are commonly used. That it is possible for upper grade children to get the idea of phrasing titles effectively is shown by this list of twenty-three titles taken from the papers of a single class.

Hired, Tired, and Fired.

Catching a Rat.

Mixing Tins.

False Alarm.

Too Sure.

A Bad Shot.

In and Out.

A Midnight Caller.

A Good Chase.

Obedience Pays.

"Safety First."

An Unexpected Ducking.

A Hasty Reply.

From the Frying Pan Into the Fire.

Cheated at the Circus.

Taking Home my Report Card.

"The Battle of Chicken Run."

Act No. 13.

A Wet Seat.

A Breach of Promise.

Return Fire.

The Fortune That Was Spent in  
a Day.

No Pie.

My advice is not in any grade to waste time attempting to get over-smart titles. But we ought to take a little time to make our pupils see that the title is a very important part of their paragraphs, and worth thinking about just as carefully as the subject matter of their paragraphs. Most children in the upper grades do considerable thinking about what they are going to write. Let them, while they are doing this, also give thought to the selection and wording of the title.

## TEACHING PUPILS TO AVOID THE TRIVIAL AND THE SENSATIONAL IN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

In a previous chapter the statement has been made that the child's power of self-expression is best developed by drawing upon his own personal experience. There is an almost unanimous agreement to-day upon this point among the most prominent students of the problem of elementary composition. Besides, there is a value in training children to talk and write upon subjects drawn from personal experience which surpasses that of mere training in self-expression, as will be pointed out in the course of this discussion. This more vital purpose, however, cannot be accomplished unless children are led to a better understanding than they ordinarily possess of what is meant by "personal experience." Without this training, the "experiences" that children write about in their paragraphs are likely to be trivial and without point, or else they will abound in stories of accidents, collisions, runaways, frights, fights, fires, and other sensational subjects. It is perfectly natural, until they know better, for children to write on subjects of this sort. That is what they think of as "experience." They do not yet know that, generally speaking, they do not really "experience" such things at all, but merely "observe" them. The "experience" is not the occurrence. The "experience" is the effect upon the person witnessing or participating in a situation. Children at first are not affected by anything but the obvious, the striking, the sensational. Unless something hits them squarely between the eyes, they do not see it. This is perfectly natural, and we must not expect little children at first to see subject matter for their paragraphs in the more *subjective* experiences of life. Their lives and thinking are *objective* to a large degree. Still, it is our business to lead them gradually, so far as their capacity to understand may give us warrant to do so, away from the strictly "objective" experience to one more "subjective" in nature. Older people do not need to see a runaway or a rescue



from a burning house to be furnished material for a paragraph. They see a "story" in the faces of people they meet in the street. That is because they not only see things with their eyes, but have learned to interpret what they see in terms of human life. They are able to distinguish the one bit of vital significance — of universal meaning — in what they see; all the other elements they disregard as non-essentials. Children are not able to do this, and most of them will never be able to do it if they are not earlier in life taught the habit of looking not only *at* things, but *through* things. Too many people go through life with their eyes shut. Few of them *see* what they *look* at. Still fewer of them *think* about what they *see*.

There is a purpose in this training of children to observe, to think, and to reflect upon their common everyday experience which goes deeper than mere training in self-expression and in the mastery of the fundamentals of written technique. There is a value to it higher even than that of training children to think clearly and consecutively, which is commonly held to be the chief end of language teaching. This purpose is to teach the child through constant observation and reflection to become acquainted with himself, to learn to measure the breadth and the value of his own life, to add to his own life the beauty and the significance of life around him, which he has never seen save as a blur. It is, in a word, to help him to have life more abundantly.

This training is of necessity a very slow process, and no more than the beginnings of it can be expected in the grammar school. A good way to begin is to encourage pupils to select subjects into which they can put a little of their own thinking, opinions, and judgments. One sentence expressing the pupil's personal feeling — his reaction upon some "experience" — is worth a dozen that merely narrate the details of some occurrence. Children *do* have personal impressions and opinions. They have their own ideas about persons and things. (Their honest views of many of our school practices would, for example, be interesting, and no doubt



profitable, reading.) Instead of writing about things that happen to others, let them write about the things that happen to *themselves* — not about cut fingers, or broken arms, but about their interests, wishes, hopes, discouragements, disappointments, successes, failures, ambitions, aspirations, likes, dislikes, cares, troubles, difficulties, rewards, punishments, satisfactions, regrets, resolves, — and the thousand and one other things that children experience every day of their lives and quite as poignantly as grown-up people do.

### THE “SINGLE PHASE IDEA”

Besides being *personal*, subjects should be *brief*. That is, they should be subjects about which children can write something interesting within the limits of a paragraph as short as the “standard paragraphs” for the different grades. This means that only a *single phase* of a subject can be presented in any one paragraph at any one time.

This principle of the “single phase” is fundamental to the scheme of paragraph writing laid down in this Course of Study. It is highly important, therefore, that teachers should from the earliest years seek to train children, day in and day out, to select a *single phase* of a subject for “elaboration” in their paragraphs, instead of permitting them to spread themselves out thin, as they are sure to do in the absence of careful, persistent effort upon the part of teachers, over all the things, near or remote, that may suggest themselves in connection with a chosen subject. The best of teaching probably cannot prevent some pupils of every class, even after they have selected a properly “narrowed” subject, from introducing irrelevant details into their paragraphs. But most children, if the training is begun early enough and persevered in long enough, can be made to understand the principle of the “single phase” and observe it habitually in their paragraph writing.

The *single phase idea* is only another name for the *paragraph sense*. And the *paragraph sense* is as vital to effective organization of thought in a group of sentences as the *sentence sense* is vital to the correct expression of single units of thought. The teacher who can get both these things into the consciousness of her pupils has a clear road before her for the teaching of the things that most teachers never have time to reach, because they are never able to extricate themselves from the confusion of bad sentences and of rambling, disconnected thinking.

The compositions that follow will serve; better than any amount of discussion, to show just what is meant by the lack of the *single phase*, — the failure of the writers to *select a single point*, capable of interesting development in a short paragraph.

In some of the lower-grade compositions shown here the lack of the single phase may not be so noticeable as in the longer upper grade compositions. The defect is, nevertheless, present in these compositions, as a little closer study of them will reveal. The habit of choosing *just one thing* to write about cannot be established too early. If pupils in the lower grades are trained right in this respect, the trouble will not have to be remedied when these same pupils reach the higher grades.

These compositions are reproduced exactly from the originals.

## PARAGRAPHS LACKING THE "SINGLE PHASE" QUALITY

### (SECOND GRADE)

Yesterday I went up the farm  
I went in the car.  
The car was going fast  
We saw bird in the apple tree  
My father mild the cow  
I fed the chicks

## (SECOND GRADE)

I write and read in school.  
There is a yard in back of the school.  
We do number in school  
There are pictures in school.

## (THIRD GRADE)

I have a doll. I make all the dresses for her. She has a pink silk dress. My mother made a white hamburg bonnet for her. Our baby tries to pull her eye lashes.

## THIS NOONTIME

## (FOURTH GRADE)

This noontime after I ate my dinner then I cleared off the table. Then I asked my mother if I could go out so I went out. When I was out I asked Mary what was the matter. She said her ruler was down the crack.

## PICKING CLOVER

## (FOURTH GRADE)

Last night after school I went up to see my grandma. After that I met my sister going home from school so I went home with her. When we got to the bottom of the hill we saw Greta and her sister picking clover. My sister said come on and see if we can get some four leafed clover. We could find many three leafed clovers but no two or four.

## MY PET RABBIT

## (FIFTH GRADE)

I bought a rabbit named Nick. When I go to feed him he comes to me as if he never was fed in the morning. He is a black Rabbit. When my brother goes to feed him he will not go to him

and I have to give it to him. I built him a house I painted the house red. It is a very big house. He dug a hole in the ground to get out.

### A PLEASANT SUNDAY

(SEVENTH GRADE)

Getting into the automobile we were soon on our way to Revere. Arriving there we were surprised to see an aroplane flying through the air. Following it to Marblehead I had the excitement of seeing it come down and stop. The flyer was very large and also very interesting to look at. At last after looking at it for a long time we started to go back to Revere. Just as we came to the first arch they were lit, and to me it looked like fairyland.

### AN ACCIDENT

(SEVENTH GRADE)

The boy has the foot ball and is running down the field. As I was on the other side playing against this boy, I tried to tackle him by the legs. As I did I fell and he and all the others fall on top. My wrist was over a hole. When one of them fell on my arm, I had felt a shock go in through my arm, and when I got up my wrist was broken. Then one of the older boys pulled it as hard as he could. I went home and my mother sent for the doctor but he did not come for an hour after. But he came and tended to it. Then for three nights I could not sleep at all. Just a week before this the boy next house to mine had broken his right arm. While my left wrist was broken. We went to the show one day and every one looked at us because his right arm was brok and my left wrist was.

### GOOD EXAMPLES OF "THE SINGLE PHASE" QUALITY

The following compositions show, by contrast with the foregoing, how much more of interest, of vividness, and of the "personal

touch" there is in the paragraph wholly given up to a narration or description or a discussion of some *single thing*, which has somehow or other appealed to the child's interest and given him a desire to tell about it. At the same time they illustrate the point discussed in a foregoing chapter as one of the things we should work for — the paragraph into which the child puts *a little of his own feeling or thinking*. They are not free from minor defects. But as examples of the *brief, pointed, personal paragraph* that we are seeking to develop through our teaching of composition they are entirely satisfactory. Every one is printed exactly as it was written.

(SECOND GRADE)

On the farm a man has a rabbit. I feed the rabbit with clover. I like to watch the rabbits nose when it eats.

(SECOND GRADE)

When I was on the farm I saw a big dog. I tried to sit on his back but he bent down and made me slide off. I had a lot of fun with him.

(SECOND GRADE)

I have new dress.  
It buttons in the back.  
It is hard to button.  
My aunt helps me to button it.

(THIRD GRADE)

Yesterday was my little brother's birthday. I bought him a present of a ring. He said he would rather have had a pie.

### MY DOLL

(FOURTH GRADE)

At the fair my brother won a doll. It is dressed like a nurse. She has a white cap with a Red cross on it. If she was real she would help the sick people.

## RIGGING A ELECTRIC LIGHT

(FIFTH GRADE)

In my room I rigged up a electric light. I saved up seventy cents, and bought a battery, bulb, a switch and some wire. Every night I light it. It works as good as a large one.

## THE ROBIN FAMILY

(FIFTH GRADE)

In the top most bow of our biggest cherry tree there is a robins nest. Yesterday the mother coaxed two babies out of the nest. They could not fly more than a foot high. All morning they sat in lowest branch of the little cherry tree. Mother would not let me cage them for fear they would die.

## A STRUGGLE FOR FOOD AND LIFE

(SIXTH GRADE)

One day a robin flew down from a tree to the ground. It was trying to pull a worm out of its home. The worm was fighting for its life and the robin for its food. They struggled for quit a while. Then a men walking by frightened the robin and it flew away.

## THE VISITOR

(SIXTH GRADE)

In our schoolroom we had a visitor. She came from East Boston. It was yesterday afternoon she paid us the visit. I think she is a teacher. This thought came to me because she seemed to be particularly interested in our language stories. She may have come to see if we could do better work than her pupils.

## SOMETHING UNDISCOVERED

(SIXTH GRADE)

I wonder why the janitor drops his brushes. There are several reasons but I think he wants to let us know he is sweeping.



Why he does it I do not know but I wish he would stop because it distracts our attention from our lessons.

### WAITING FOR THE NO-SESSION BELL

(SEVENTH GRADE)

On a rainy afternoon in November I watched a crowd of boys who were standing near the engine house of Park street, waiting for the no-session bell to ring. At the stroke of one, two bells pealed out loudly three times in succession. A chorus of shouts from the boys proclaimed their joy. Then, after some lively pushing and jumping, they scampered off in all directions.

### CARD DAY

(SEVENTH GRADE)

It was almost a quarter of four when a small boy came into school-room carrying a bundle of cards. These reports are sent home to let the parents of the pupils know how they have behaved during the past month and how well they have done their work. While the cards were being distributed the pupils looked anxiously about. In a few minutes some of them began to smile while others looked very blue indeed.

### THE HOUSE IN WHICH I WAS BORN

(SEVENTH GRADE)

The house in which I was born still stands on Union St. When we lived there we kept it as clean as we could. The people that live there now are foreigners and are untidy. The garden I kept is now destroyed. The hinges upon which the blinds rested are now broken. An old mattress is lying under the steps. It makes me feel sorry to see the house in which I was born so untidy.

## TICKET SELLING

(SEVENTH GRADE)

"No, I don't think I can go. But if I do, I will get my ticket of you" was a very polite refusal given to me by one of my friends. Another was, "Don't bother me, I am too busy." Why is it that people can't be polite? It wouldn't have hurt the second one to be a little more courteous. I have learned one lesson and that was from selling tickets. It is this; one can never be too polite or too courteous.

## WHAT BECAME OF MY NICKEL

(EIGHTH GRADE)

While I was walking along Lawrence St., I happened to see a nickel in the gutter. I picked it up and examined it, and found that it was good. Seeing a candy store on one side and an Ice-Cream Parlor on the other, I did not know what to buy. I determined to toss up the nickel, and if it came down on heads, I would buy candy, and if it came down on tails, I would buy ice cream. I tossed it up, and to my surprise it rolled out in the street and went down the sewer.

## OUR ADVENTURES AT THE BIRCHES

(EIGHTH GRADE)

"Come on fellows, lets go over to the meadow and ride the birches!" called my chum. No sooner said than done. When we got there we found some other fellows had the trees. We chased them off and got into the trees ourselves. Pretty soon we saw a crowd of boys coming toward us, and with them the boys we had run off. Then we knew we were in for it. But we only climbed farther out on the limbs. When they climbed the trees we dropped to the ground and beat it home on the double-quick.

## AN INCIDENT

(EIGHTH GRADE)

Upon passing a short alley a few sharp whacks of a whip reached my ear. Looking toward the direction from when they came I was astonished to see a man holding a whip in his uplifted hand and about to lay it unmercifully across the back of his horse. A large crowd soon gathered and amongst it the driver spied a policeman. Immediately he dropped the whip to the ground and began patting the horse on the head. After a sound scolding from the officer, and also a threat that he would be arrested if he was found acting that way again, the man rode away and the crowd dispersed.

This point has been dwelt upon at considerable length because I believe the success of the one-paragraph scheme of composition depends upon our ability to teach children habitually to observe it in their paragraph writing. If the one-paragraph composition were to be conceived as meaning no more than the writing of six or seven off-hand sentences about a subject (upon which, if pupils were allowed to do so, they could easily write twice as many sentences) without any particular thought of organization, it might well be open to the criticism of setting up as a maximum of composition a fragmentary and unorganized collection of sentences. If, on the other hand, the idea of a one-paragraph composition is merely to omit indentions and crowd into a single paragraph what pupils formerly were taught to distribute among several paragraphs, the plan would be open to still more serious objections.

It is the careful organization of the pupil's thought around a single central theme, by means of which a simple, short paragraph becomes a complete and satisfying unit of self-expression, which makes the one-paragraph maximum scheme of composition logical and complete, and in all ways sufficient for the purpose of elementary language training.

## STARTING THE PARAGRAPH RIGHT

Devices are dangerous, for the reason that often they are so overworked or so mechanically applied by teachers that the pupil's naturalness and spontaneity are destroyed, and the second state of the child becomes worse than the first.

One suggestion, however, has been used so successfully with grammar grade pupils that it is given here. Briefly, the suggestion is that pupils be gradually trained to compose *a beginning sentence that will lay the essential foundation of the whole paragraph* — a sentence that gives the young writer something definite to handle, something specific to say; something, as it were, *to prove*.

An examination of faulty paragraphs from the standpoint of unity — of the single phase — shows most of them to lack a beginning sentence containing a statement which can be *expanded, developed, and proved*. Here are a few beginning sentences taken at random from children's paragraphs.

"Last Saturday my brother and I went fishing."

"Saturday afternoon my friend Edith and her cousin and I thought we would go for a walk."

"Last Sunday we went to Franklin Park."

"A few days ago my aunt and I went to Salem."

"We started out at five o'clock in the morning."

"One day I went to a farm in West Andover."

"One day it was raining very hard."

"Every summer my friends and I go camping."

"Last year I went to Canobie Lake."

Sentences like these give no real clue to what is to follow in the paragraph. They suggest anything, nothing. They do not arouse interest nor curiosity nor expectation. Look at the first of these sentences: "*Last Saturday my brother and I went fishing.*" That is a mere statement of fact, which may or may not lead to something worth while. Usually it takes two or three more

sentences of as blank a character to get the writer to the place where he really *tells* something. Now suppose we change that beginning sentence into one like this: "*My brother and I had great luck fishing last Saturday.*" In such a sentence the writer has his work cut out for him, he has something definite to narrate, or, as we say in geometry, *to prove*. He will then not waste half of his paragraph getting down to the thing he has in mind to tell. Or, take the fourth sentence: "*A few days ago my aunt and I went to Salem.*" Here, again, no hint is given as to what particular item of interest connected with Salem the pupil is going to relate. Suppose, instead, the pupil had begun, "*The Peabody Institute in Salem has a most interesting collection of —,*" or "*The House of the Seven Gables is one of the most famous of the old houses in Salem,*" or "*I visited what is known as 'the oldest house in Salem' last Saturday,*" the writer would have had in any one of the suggested sentences a specific theme for her paragraph (she mentioned all three places in her paragraph about Salem) which would have provided ample material of a most interesting kind for a six or seven sentence paragraph, and which would have saved the writer from the mistake of *mentioning* several things and *describing* none of them. In a similar manner, any of the other beginning sentences quoted above could be changed into a definite statement of what the writer intended to tell about in the paragraph.

To attempt to teach the technique of paragraph construction to young children in any formal way will probably do more harm than good. It is hoped, therefore, that this suggestion with regard to a more specific and more suggestive beginning sentence as one possible way of fastening children down to the discussion of a single topic will not be construed as a suggestion that teachers should straightway begin talking to their pupils about "topic sentences" and "summary sentences" and other "residua of rhetoric." If teachers do, they will be sure to wreck the whole business. There is a place for the formal study of the mechanical structure of the paragraph, but its place is not in the grammar school. The device



of the beginning sentence can be applied *where it is needed* without calling it by any technical name. The main thing is not how the first sentence or the last sentence, or any other sentence, should be formulated. The point to be made clear to pupils is that *only one thing* is to be the subject of a paragraph, that they are to waste as little time as possible in getting at the *heart* of their subject, and that they are to stop promptly when they have done telling the thing they started out to tell. Beyond observing these requirements the utmost individuality of attack should be encouraged.

Here are two compositions that illustrate the point of this chapter. Both have a fishing experience for the subject. The writer of the first one uses up half of the paragraph getting ready to fish. The writer of the second one starts his paragraph the instant he has hooked a bass. The first writer, after wasting half his space, does little with the rest of it beyond carrying on a loud conversation with his companion about their great luck, with nothing substantial to prove it. The second one doesn't last long, but things are lively while it lasts. There is no question as to which is the better story.

## AN EXPERIENCE IN FISHING

(EIGHTH GRADE)

As there was nothing else to do my cousin and I decided to go fishing. The day was misty and we knew this would be a good day to fish. The place where we were to go lies in the outskirts of New Hampshire. It is called "Beaver's Brook." We got all the things we needed and started out. We arrived at our destination in a very short while. At once we started our luck. In about three minutes my cousin shouted, "I have a fish." She pulled in and found out it was a small one. She thought it was a large one because it felt very heavy. After a while I shouted that I had caught a fish. We fished for about an hour and it turned out to be a lucky hour. We then started home with happy faces.



## A GOOD CATCH

(EIGHTH GRADE)

At last I had a bite. I pulled and pulled, until a large bass appeared on the end of my line. Flip, flap, now he was in the boat, and now on my feet. I gave a kick, up in the air went the bass, and splash! he was in the water again. Lucky for me, he could not get away, as he was still on the hook. I pulled him in again, and what do you think? He was the largest bass caught there that summer.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD ENDINGS

Equal in importance to a good beginning sentence is a good ending sentence. Often the ending sentence is the more important of the two, for the reason that the last impression counts for so much. Many otherwise poor paragraphs are saved by a well-phrased closing comment, just as many paragraphs that start out strong peter out at the end because of a closing sentence that is trite or flat or superfluous. The following paragraphs illustrate this point so well that no further comment is necessary. The endings are printed in italics.

## WEAK ENDINGS ILLUSTRATED

## REHEARSAL OF THE BAND

(SEVENTH GRADE)

Every Sunday and Thursday the Verdi Band has a rehearsal at the Elm St. hall. I play the cornet. This band was named after Mr. Verdi, a great Italian music writer. The concert starts at seven o'clock Sundays, and Thursdays at eight. We play many great opera pieces. When we play we have to notice many kinds of marks, so we can play soft or loud. *I like this band very much.*

## A NEW DISCOVERY

(SEVENTH GRADE)

Our little cherry tree has grown rapidly this last year. This morning I discovered that the cherries can be easily picked from my bedroom window. This will be very handy. If I feel hungry when I am in bed all I have to do is to open the screen and pick some cherries. *They will be ripe the first of July.*

## STUCK IN THE MUD

(EIGHTH GRADE)

One day some other girls and I went picking violets. We saw some big white violets out in a swamp, so we climbed out on some tree stumps. I was just picking some violets when I heard my sister calling me. I looked up quickly and saw my sister almost up to her knees in mud. We pulled and pulled, but she was stuck fast. Just as she was sinking deeper, I saw a man coming along the road near by. He came over to us, and after a while, he pulled her out. *After that we said we would never go in a swamp again.*

## GOOD ENDINGS ILLUSTRATED

## HOW I CAUGHT A POLLYWOG

(SEVENTH GRADE)

A small pool afforded a fine place to catch pollywogs in, in the spring. One day, when I was four, my sister took me along, and when I saw the little fishes I was determined to catch one all myself. Leaning over the edge I snatched for one, but it wiggled away. Another came near, and in my eagerness I leaned over too far, and lost my balance. *It was a wet and weeping child that my sister took home from pollywog fishing.*

## CAUGHT IN THE ACT

(SEVENTH GRADE)

Once when I was a little girl I was in the sitting room alone. Our canary was singing and I stood near the cage watching him and wishing I could hold him in my hand. The cage was low enough for me to reach by standing on a chair. So climbing up, I opened the little door and as quick as a flash the canary flew out. At that critical moment in walked mother. *Some little birds tell stories, but Dick never told how I fared.*

## THE MASTERY OF "THE SENTENCE IDEA"

The fundamental thing, the element upon which all other details of composition depend and upon which the whole superstructure of composition is built, is the mastery of the sentence. Nothing, therefore, is more important in the earlier grades than the development of what is variously called "the sentence idea," "the sentence sense," "the sentence feeling," "the sentence instinct" — the trained habit of mind by which the completed thought is recognized as complete, and left to stand by itself. The lack of this fundamental "sentence sense" is the most glaring fault of elementary school compositions. It is a natural enough fault in very young pupils, but its persistence in the higher grades, as is too often the case, seems almost indefensible.

This fault appears in two forms. The first is present in the composition that rambles on and on, with statement after statement strung along on a series of "and's," "but's," and "so's," often without so much as a comma to separate the different statements. Very young children talk in this fashion, prattling on in a breathless stream of words, seldom dropping their voices until they have reached the end of what they have to say. Children in school talk in much the same way. Here are some stenographic reports of actual talk of third-grade pupils recently heard in our own schools :

"My mother told me to go to the store and get her a loaf of bread and then I went to the store and the bread fell down and got all muddy."

"The ship was very, very long and it carried coal and sometimes it carried pig iron and one day my papa got off the boat to buy me a fish line and one day I had that fish line and I was trying to fish on the river but the fish pulled so that I couldn't fish any more and my mother said to stop because it was too hard."

The source of this fault suggests its remedy. Children must be taught through much careful *oral* work to break themselves of this bad habit. Most of our troubles in written composition come from our neglect of oral composition. The child who has been taught to speak in clean-cut sentences will give the teacher little annoyance by writing the kind of sentence that is here described. This has been said before, and is repeated here only to remind the teacher that if this fault persists in the written compositions of her pupils it is because she has failed to head off the trouble by sufficient oral practice on this particular point. While the habit is being broken up, the children's sentences will become short and jerky. But this will do no harm. The later grades will attend to that. In any case, the "choppy" sentence is preferable to the "run on" sentence.

The other form in which this lack of "sentence feeling" shows itself is worse in some respects than the first, because it is a more violent breach of the laws of the sentence. Here is an illustration of it:

"My dog is a spaniel his name is Nep, that stands for Neptune. Neptune was the sea god, we call the dog Nep because he is so fond of the water, he likes to be in it all the time, once he got caught in the weeds and was nearly drowned."

The fault here consists not in stringing together a number of statements by "ands," but in running complete statements together without periods and capitals. Sometimes no mark separates the sentences. If any mark is employed, it is only the

comma. Hence it is that text-book writers, in referring to this fault, call it "the comma sentence." So common is the blunder in the writing of young children that it has come to be known as The Child's Error. To make the offense more heinous in the sight of his pupils one teacher is known to have named it "The Baby's Mistake." In high school text-books (because of our neglect the fault often persists beyond the elementary school) it is variously referred to as "the badge of ignorance," "the badge of shiftlessness," "the hopeless error." These epithets indicate how important it is that this fault should be gotten rid of early, if it is to be gotten rid of at all. Calling names, however, seldom does any good. What we need to remember is that the habit of running sentences together, either by the "and" method or the "no stop" method, is an exceedingly unfortunate one, and very hard to overcome, if it once gets a good start.

If a close study is made of children's compositions with reference to The Child's Error, it will be found to occur most often when there is a close relation between one sentence and the next. This close relation is present whenever the succeeding sentence begins with a pronoun the antecedent of which is the subject of the preceding sentence. Thus, in the illustration above, "My dog is a spaniel, his name is Nep," the child is conscious of a very close relation between the two statements. He has a dog, and the dog's name is Nep. For this reason, children are particularly in danger of committing the Child's Error when a sentence begins with *he, she, it, they, this, these, etc.*, because sentences beginning with these words, while being grammatically independent, are somewhat dependent for their meaning upon the preceding sentence. In the same way, a clause or a phrase coming at the end of a sentence is likely to be thought of as an independent statement. It is easy for the child to forget it is a part of the sentence. Thus: "Washington once saved a child. Jumping into a swift stream to save it." Or: "And so the boy got the sled after all. Which was just what he wanted." Trained writers do not place clauses and phrases



in such places. But beginners are crude in the art of sentence structure, and for this reason are prone to use the rear-end phrase or clause, set off as an independent statement marked by both capital and period.

It has been thought worth while to present the problem of the sentence in considerable detail, and to call attention to some of the reasons which render pupils peculiarly liable to the errors we have been describing. *The mastery of the sentence is absolutely basal in elementary written work.* It is folly to talk about teaching "style" and the other refinements of writing until children are *sentence-sure*. There are a good many things we would do, if we could. A few we must do. "There is no use in trying" to build a superstructure, when the foundation is lacking. And the foundation of all writing — of all expression of thought — is the sentence.

### GAINING THE MASTERY OF THE SENTENCE IDEA THROUGH THREE-SENTENCE ORAL COMPOSITIONS

One of the most effective ways of getting children to talk is to limit all oral compositions for a little while, in all grades, to *three sentences*. This temporary limitation produces two very important results: First, it makes it possible to get *every child to talk* — the bashful ones as well as the talkative ones. Children who could not be lifted upon their feet by a derrick to give a long oral composition, will rise of their own accord to such a simple requirement as *three short sentences*. Besides, by enforcing for a while such a limitation upon the length of each pupil's composition, *every child has time to talk* in a twenty-minute period, because no voluble child is allowed to monopolize the time by rehearsing the "Exploits of Elaine" or some other five-reel story he saw "at the movies" the night before. Second, the *three-sentence requirement* sets every child *thinking of his sentences*. He must have *three* — one, two, three. Each must begin with a capital and end (gen-



erally) with a period. He must make sure that the teacher and the close-listening pupils *hear* them in his voice. This *daily* attention to the *sentence*, hearing nothing but sentences — *short, simple sentences* — counting them on their fingers, as many will do, discussing Johnny's first sentence or Mary's last one, will do more to establish the *sentence-sense* in children than any other scheme of teaching this most fundamental thing in composition.

It has already been shown how fundamental to all success in teaching composition is the establishment of the *sentence-sense*. It is not too much to say that the lack of this *sentence-sense* has been responsible for most of our composition troubles. Seven-eighths of our old-fashioned correction of papers was spent in trying to make coherent a jumble of floundering sentences. Teachers have had to use their blue pencils in much the same way that a woodsman uses his ax to clear away the thick tangle of undergrowth. If the straggling, confused sentence structure could be eliminated from the compositions of children, the work of "correcting" them would be surprisingly reduced. More important than the release from the labor of trying to chop a little lane of daylight between the "ingrowing" sentences of the average composition, is the freedom it wins for the teacher to give attention to the larger and more significant features of composition writing, which heretofore she has never had time to teach.

The short oral composition is much more effective as a means of fixing the *sentence idea* in the minds of children than is the short written composition. "Talking" compositions consumes only a small fraction of the time that writing them requires. This means much more practice for the individual in the same length of time. The whole class, too, hears every oral composition, notes its good qualities or its defects, hears the teacher's comments upon it, hears the point of her criticism applied immediately in the compositions that follow, and thereby profits from the exercise to an extent it is impossible for a class as a whole to profit from an exercise in written composition.

This period of restriction to the "three-sentence composition" should not be too long. Two or three months ought to be sufficient for implanting *the sentence idea* firmly in the minds of children. During this period it is well to omit written composition altogether. The time lost for written composition will be more than made up by the mastery the pupils will have gained in the use of the sentence.

## CORRECT SPELLING OF COMMON WORDS

There are two things in the general run of school compositions that, above all others, make countless teachers mourn. The first is the bad sentence — the "stringy" sentence, the "comma sentence," or worse, the sentence that is not a sentence at all. This was dealt with in the two preceding chapters. The other is the misspelling of common words. If these two conspicuous defects were absent from the compositions, how much brighter the world would seem to the teacher who sits down resignedly to correct a set of papers. Even a paper absolutely wooden in respect to interest and style, if it were free from these two glaring faults, would seem positively hopeful.

We have been teaching spelling faithfully enough, but we have not been teaching it intelligently enough. We have been wasting precious time teaching children how to spell thousands of words they seldom or never write, while we have not taught them to spell the really small number of words that they write all the time. The trouble has been that our material of spelling has been chosen without reference to the fact that children possess three vocabularies (a reading, a speaking, and a writing vocabulary) and that spelling relates only to the last of these, the writing vocabulary. All this is admirably summed up in the conclusions of the investigation of the material of spelling made last year by the Division of Education in the University of South Dakota. Here are three of them :

1. Since students in the highest grade of our common schools have on the average less than 2500 words in their writing, or spelling, vocabularies, our first conclusion is, *our spelling material is bad in that it gives thousands of words which children do not use, and at the same time we are not teaching them to spell the much smaller lists of words which they do use.*

2. The words which give most trouble in spelling are found, almost without exception, in the writing vocabularies of the lower grades; and since these troublesome but useful words are not pointed out and effectively dealt with in these early grades, *our handling of the most dangerous spelling material is not efficient, and students go on misspelling, year after year, words that should be mastered in the early school years.*

3. Since grade students commonly use from 500 to 2500 words in writing, yet on the average misspell but about fifty words, *not one child out of a thousand misspelling as many as one hundred words, our spelling problem is not so gigantic as it is commonly believed to be, for the reason that a handful of words misspelled over and over by each student has misled us in our judgment.*

A list of about two hundred common words frequently misspelled is printed in this course of study (under assignment of work by grades), upon which teachers should place special emphasis in their teaching of spelling. The list contains practically all of the "one hundred spelling demons" of the South Dakota report. Some of the words are repeated every year. Most of the words are introduced early in the course. A vigorous campaign against this handful of troublesome words for the space of a single year would go a long way toward banishing from school composition the great bulk of the spelling errors which at present disfigure them.

### TEACHING PUPILS TO BE CRITICAL OF THEIR COMPOSITION

An enormous amount of time has been wasted in the correction of "compositions," due to the lack of a true conception upon the

part of the teacher as to just what the true purpose of the teacher's correction should be. Judging from the general practice of generations of teachers, the purpose seems to have been to make the composition correct in every particular. The common procedure of the teacher has been something like this: She marks all misspelled words, puts in a capital here and a period there, inserts a comma occasionally, combines a pair of jerky sentences into a single smooth one, and maybe herself writes a closing sentence to make the composition finish strong. Then the pupil rewrites it in his best handwriting (often making a few mistakes in the "revise" that he did not make the first time), and the composition is laid away in a drawer as a sample of the pupil's work. The next day she does the same. So do the pupils. With perfect serenity they repeat in their compositions the mistakes of yesterday, of last week, and of last year, which all the while the teachers have been laboriously correcting. For generations teachers have been correcting compositions in some such way as this, and their pupils have gone on making the same mistakes over and over again. Evidently we have been going up the wrong street.

Now it is not the pupil's *composition* that we want to make perfect. We want to make *the pupil's power to write one a little less imperfect*. The *product* upon which teachers expend so much time in their correction is of little importance. It is the pupil's *power to see his own defects and to remedy them* that is all important. The whole purpose of the teachers' correction should be to cultivate in their pupils the habit of self-criticism. *Therefore the only correction of compositions that is of any earthly use is that which trains pupils to correct their own.*

Teachers should remember that the matter of the pupil's correction of his own work depends on his *interest*. You cannot develop the power of self-criticism in the boy who doesn't care whether he is right or wrong. One teacher can compel a boy to write a composition, but the whole school department cannot make

him correct it intelligently *unless he wants to*. It is the teacher's business to make him want to.

There will not be much chance of his wanting to correct his own written work or much profit in letting him assist in the correction of other pupils' compositions until the following things shall have been done :

1. There must be aroused in him the desire for self-expression.
2. He must be led to see that there are ways of saying things which are better than other ways; that there is something which we call "good English," which it is worth while learning how to use.
3. He must be led honestly to prefer the better way of saying things to the way that was good enough for him before.
4. His criticism of his own work must at first be directed until it is impartial and unsparing.
5. His criticism of others must be directed and controlled. Criticism, like charity, should begin at home, but it very often does not. Until a pupil has proved himself a careful critic of his own compositions, he should not be allowed to criticise the work of others. At all times children, as well as teachers, must remember that criticism is quite as much a matter of merit as it is of mistakes. Pupils must be taught to realize when a thing is good, to be made to think why it is good, and to learn what it means to commend as well to condemn.

It has been clearly demonstrated to the three hundred elementary teachers in the schools where the author's scheme of one-paragraph compositions has been followed for several years that the teacher's correction of composition has been enormously reduced. In the first place, the limitation of all "compositions" to a *single paragraph* reduces to a minimum the amount of written work the teacher has to examine and criticise. Hardly secondary to this strict limitation of the amount of writing as a means of lightening the teacher's burden of correction, has been the effect of the early establishment in the pupils' minds of *the*



*sentence-sense* (discussed at length in previous chapters) and the insistence upon the use by the pupils of *short simple sentences* until they have reached the stage where they may be trusted to use longer sentences without confusion. There is no longer any question that to the elimination of confused sentence structure from children's writing may be credited the saving of much precious time hitherto wasted in faithful but fruitless correction.

More important than the relief which comes to the teacher from her emancipation from the daily grind of "correcting" compositions is the opportunity this new freedom affords her to do some really constructive criticism of her pupils' work which she never enjoyed when her whole attention was bent upon the correcting of wrong spelling and bad sentence structure. Under the new dispensation she is able to *help* her pupils instead of merely *marking* them.

In the upper grades, the pupil's observance of the following rules will minimize the necessity of the teacher's correction :

1. To select a subject out of his experience which he is sure can be handled interestingly in a single short paragraph.
2. To settle what particular phase of his experience he shall choose for the "point" of the paragraph.
3. To think over in advance a title for the paragraph which shall best express the particular "point" selected.
4. To think out in advance a good *beginning sentence* that will lead straight to the heart of the thing, instead of wasting half the paragraph "getting ready to get ready" to tell the "story."
5. To think out an *ending sentence* that will clinch the point of the story — preferably a sentence carrying the writer's personal reaction upon the experience narrated or described.
6. To hold himself to the use of fairly short sentences, each of which has one and only one principal thought.
7. After the first rough draft, to correct and improve the paragraph, by reading it "out loud to himself" several times, paying attention *separately* to such matters as these :



- a) *The first time* to inspect and improve the paragraph as a whole: good title; prompt beginning; snappy ending; no trivial detail; better choice of words — more expressive verbs, more telling adjectives.
- b) *The second time* to improve his sentence structure and his grammar; to note when a long sentence may be broken into two shorter ones with advantage, or when a succession of very short sentences, giving a “choppy” effect, may be made into slightly longer sentences, connected by some other words than “and,” or “but,” and other overworked connectives; to see that every verb agrees in number with its subject, and every pronoun with its antecedent.
- c) *The third time* to make sure that every sentence begins with a capital and ends with the proper mark; to see that commas are used where they are necessary to the sense; to run his eyes over the words to see that each is spelled correctly, particularly those words which have proved his downfall many times before.

Let it be remarked, in closing, that no child profits much from rewriting his composition. It is a good deal more sensible to let him apply what he has learned from his teacher's correction to a new composition. There are times, of course, when slovenly work must be penalized by compelling the perpetrator to do his work over. But the ordinary rewriting of papers, to secure a “high finish,” is generally a waste of precious time.

## PART TWO

### ASSIGNMENT OF WORK BY GRADES

#### FIRST GRADE

*(The work of the first grade is entirely oral.)*

##### I. Aims.

To encourage free talk about things that children are interested in.

To secure clear articulation and correct forms in everyday speech.

To lead children always to use the sentence in talking.

Children's talk should be free, spontaneous, and hearty. While encouraging self-expression, it is the teacher's task to guide and control the speech, to prevent mere babbling, and to make the exercise a pleasure to both listener and talker.

With regard to ability to express themselves, an average class will be found to be divided into the garrulous, the monosyllabic, and the inarticulate. The garrulous must not be suppressed, but directed, — "Tell me *one* thing about your doll." The monosyllabic must be encouraged to expand a word into a sentence; next, to give two sentences, and finally, to tell the whole story. The inarticulate will soon follow the leaders and take part in this work; they form the rear guard here as in all other kinds of school work.

##### II. Topics.

Child's experiences at home — helping mother, father; play-things; pets; Saturday good times.

Child's activities at school — helping teacher, playmates; on the playground; the reading lesson; games.

Observations of nature — flowers, birds, animals.

## III. Illustrations.

A number of illustrations are given here to show what an interesting variety of oral work can be developed from the above-mentioned sources and to indicate the general character of the oral work that should be sought after in the first grade. They are not put here to be drilled upon and memorized by children. They are illustrations pure and simple, and are not at all intended as subject matter to be learned by heart.

1. *Suggestions for Developing, Guiding, and Controlling First Efforts*

## a. One sentence.

TEACHER. I have a dog. He can jump through a hoop.

Who has a dog? Tell me one thing your dog can do.

TEACHER. My cat washes her face every time she drinks milk.

Who has a cat? Tell me one thing your cat does.

TEACHER. Tell me one thing you do to help your mother. Begin this way —

I wipe the dishes for mother.

TEACHER. Who has been out walking?

Tell me one thing you saw.

TEACHER. Who has been on a visit?

Think what pleased you most. Tell me about it.

## b. More than one sentence.

TEACHER. Who has a top?

Select three children who signify they have a top to come forward and follow your lead.

TEACHER. *To the first child:* Tell me you have a top.

CHILD. I have a top.

TEACHER. *To the second child:* Tell me the color of your top. Begin this way It —

CHILD. It is blue.

TEACHER. *To the third child:* Tell me one thing it can do. Begin with It.

CHILD. It can spin.

Next, have the three sentences repeated by the children, one after the other, so as to give the effect of a *connected whole*. This method gives a strong impression of three complete sentences, and should be continued (three children taking part in making the three sentences) until it is certain that the children have no further tendency to give their thoughts connected by *and*.

The last step will be to have *one* child give the three sentences.

The teacher must be ready to give help through suggestive questions until children respond easily.

## 2. *Suggestive Talk on Child's Experiences at Home*

### HELPING.

In vacation, I helped my mother make four beds every day.

First, we turned the mattress.

Then we put on the sheets and spread.

We made it look very smooth.

Mother said I saved her many steps.

### PETS.

I have a canary.

He takes a bath every day.

Then he dries himself in the sun.

### PLAYTHINGS.

My doll has a little bedroom.

It has a bed and a table.

She has a little kitchen, too.

There is a stove in it.

### SATURDAY.

I played soldier with my brothers.

My big brother was the captain.

The baby carried the flag.

I beat the drum.

*3. Suggestive Talk from Child's Reading*

The little old woman made a gingerbread boy.  
He ran away from her and from the little old man.  
But he couldn't run away from the fox.

Boy Blue always wore blue clothes.  
One day, he fell fast asleep under a haystack.  
His sheep got into the meadow.

*4. Suggestive Talk on Observations of Nature*

## FLOWERS.

I picked some purple asters last Sunday.  
I brought them to school on Monday.  
I gave them to my teacher.

## BIRDS.

I saw a robin this morning.  
He went hopping along.  
I said, "How do you do?"  
He just shook his tail and flew away.

## ANIMALS.

I have a black kitty.  
She loves to catch mice.  
She brings them to me.

## WIND.

The wind called the little leaves.  
The red ones came.  
The yellow ones came, too.  
Then they all played together.

5. *Miscellaneous*

I raked the ground for a garden.  
Then I made some little holes with my finger.  
I put the seeds in the holes.

In vacation I went to Boston.  
I saw the animals in Franklin Park.  
I liked the elephants best.

Mary and I took a walk.  
We found a lost baby.  
We took it home to its mother.

I am going to have some new sneaks.  
They will be brown.  
My father will buy them Saturday.

I wanted a ball very much.  
Mother has just given me one.  
It is a big blue one.

I made a big snow ball.  
It was bigger than my head.  
I could sit on it.

We have a garden in our schoolroom.  
There are tulips in it.  
We children cut them out and colored them.

I have to go to the butcher's shop every Saturday.  
He has so much to do I have to wait.  
Then I watch him cut the meat with a sharp knife.

I couldn't find my cap.  
I hunted everywhere.  
The dog had put it under the bed.



My uncle gave me a nickel.  
I put it in my pocket.  
When I went to spend it, it was gone.

My father gave me a quarter.  
I bought five flags.  
They are pasted on the windows.

My mother pulled my tooth out when I didn't expect her to.  
I was scared.  
She gave me a piece of candy to stop my crying.

#### IV. Preparation for Written Work.

No written language work is required in this grade. But much may be done by a methodical use of the seat work that accompanies the reading systems for this grade to insure technically correct written work when it is taken up in Grade II.

The printed word-cards that are used for forming the rhyme or sentence on the desk may be used to teach orderly arrangement on the desk, and the placing of the word-cards right side up. Even at this early stage it should be the teacher's habit to train the children to inspect their own work before she looks it over.

For the next stage, children should be taught to build their rhymes with alphabet letter-cards, first laying them with word-cards. The first step should be to teach the right handling of the material. Don't pass out so many cards that the desk will be crowded. Have the letters spread out so that each one may be seen. When a given letter is desired, see that the children search for it with their eyes, not with their fingers. Don't allow time to be wasted in picking letters over or sifting them through their fingers.

The making of the rhymes or sentences with letter-cards affords opportunity to teach differences between similar letters like *d* and *p*, *u* and *n*, etc., the placing of the sentence in a straight line across

the desk, the proper spacing of words, the placing of the capital and period in every sentence.

At the end of every such seat-work period, the teacher should direct the class as follows :

Before I look at your work look at it yourself to see if your letters are placed in a straight line across the desk.

Is there a space between words?

Read it over. Is every word there?

Look at each word. Is every letter there?

Are the letters right side up?

Is there a capital at the beginning of every sentence?

Is there a period at the end of every sentence?

In the third stage of work, children should be taught to build sentences from the teacher's dictation. Such sentences should, however, be composed of known words. Children should inspect their own work, as outlined, before the teacher looks at it.

Next, children may build individual sentences with word-cards or letter-cards. These should be rearrangements of the rhyme or story. Here are illustrations.

The little rabbit heard a noise.

She was afraid.

She said the earth was falling in.

She told all her big brothers.

They told all the large animals.

They were all afraid but the wise lion.

He took the little rabbit on his back.

They went to the tall nut tree.

They found the noise was a big nut falling on the hard sticks.

The squirrel wants to play with me.

The little squirrel is glad.

The little squirrel jumps for joy.

Little squirrel, jump for joy.  
Run, little squirrel, run.  
Play in the tree, little squirrel.  
The little squirrel plays in the rain.

A boy had a goat.  
He ran away.  
He wanted some grass.  
He would not go home.  
He would not go for the boy.  
He would not go for the rabbit.  
He did go for the bee.

Lastly, children may be given the privilege of making original sentences. They like to talk about things that interest them, and may be encouraged to find out how to spell the words they want to use. The only use and value spelling has is in connection with written work, and this connection may as well be made from the beginning. Children are proud of showing their power and ability in this way, but should be held strictly to the correct spelling of used words. Allow no guesswork.

*Illustration of child's name and address:*

Mary Salitra,  
15 Common St.,  
Lawrence, Mass.

Before leaving the grade, children should make, with alphabet letters, their own names and addresses, and the name of their school. In addition, they should have acquired the habit of placing:

- A capital letter at the beginning of their card-constructed sentences, in composing the names of persons, and in their use of the pronoun I.
- A period or question mark at the close of sentences.

## V. Errors of Speech.

Re-read the chapter in the Appendix on "Common Errors of Speech," to get a clear understanding of the principles and the methods that teachers should follow in training away the errors common to the speech of children.

This work should not be begun too early in the first grade. The teacher should, of course, take note from the very first of the errors made by the children, but she should be content for a while with gently and patiently substituting the right expression for the wrong one. For the important thing at the start is to secure spontaneity and free expression. After a little while the incorrect expression may safely be made a basis for special drill. The expressions drilled upon should, of course, be those which appear most frequently in the actual speech of the children. The drills on any expression, once begun, should be constant. No reasons need be given by the teacher to show why this form is right and the other wrong. What the child needs is plenty of opportunity for repetition of the correct form. The "language game" described and illustrated in the Appendix provides a happy method of securing the reiteration of the form the teacher may desire to impress. There is no limit to the number of games that the ingenious teacher can plan to meet a single incorrect expression, *e.g.*, the "I seen" habit.

The errors to be attacked in Grade I are not many, but they are deep rooted in the speech of the children, and will require the untiring efforts of the teacher to get rid of them. They divide into four groups: (1) verb errors; (2) pronoun errors; (3) colloquialisms; (4) mispronunciations. The teacher in the primary grades, however, is not in her teaching to make any reference to these distinctions. They are so grouped throughout the course to suggest how the teacher is herself to classify the errors which she hears made frequently by her pupils and which are not listed here. Every teacher should supplement the list of errors by others that

she has observed and noted. She should first, however, study the list of errors that are printed in the grades below and above her own. It is not worth while to attack some errors until later in the course. On the other hand, there are some errors that must be rooted out in the low grades, if they are to be rooted out at all.

In the first grade, work to correct the following errors :

I seen him.

I come to school.

He be's sick.

He ain't here.

Me and him did it.

My father, he said —

Look't.

He took it off me.

Lemme see it.

I done it.

I run all the way.

He don't want to.

I knowed it.

It was me.

This after.

Gimme that.

I ain't got no book.

Once they was a man who —

## VI. Comments and Cautions.

Do not allow a voluble child to monopolize unduly the time of the class. Do not allow an impulsive child to relate some personal experience which is of small interest to other children. Time is too valuable to be wasted in this way. The talkative child must be wisely restrained, and the uncommunicative child encouraged.

Insist on clear utterances and a natural (not a schoolroom) tone of voice.

Don't interrupt the talker if you can help it, and correct in such a way that the child will be conscious only of the *help*. It is very harmful at this stage to arouse self-consciousness or a feeling of restraint.

Do all you can to cure the "and" habit.

Children are very imitative. Consequently it is necessary that the teacher should carefully watch her own use of English. Without being too prim, she should insistently guard against slang, faulty idioms, grammatical errors, and provincial forms. She should cultivate habits of perfect enunciation, flexibility of tone, and a varied vocabulary. The teacher who cannot and does not talk well herself has no business to try to teach children to talk well.

Train children to drop the voice at the end of the sentence.

## SECOND GRADE

### ORAL

*(Four-fifths of the language time in the second grade is devoted to oral language.)*

#### I. Aims.

To secure more freedom and fluency in talking.

To lead children to tell what they have to say in an orderly manner, and to keep to the point.

To increase the power to use correct speech without rousing self-consciousness or a feeling of restraint.

To make children feel that distinct speech and a natural, pleasant tone of voice are as necessary to good talking as are interesting things to talk about.

To deepen the feeling for the sentence — never to let an "incomplete" sentence pass. Encourage use of the question sentence and the exclamation, for variety and effectiveness, without naming them or formally distinguishing them from the "telling" sentence.

#### II. Suggested Sources.

Child's experiences at home — helping father, mother, sisters and brothers.



Talks on how to act helpfully and politely at home, at school, on the playground, and in public places.

Observation of the nature world.

Games.

### III. Illustrations.

(NOTE. — It is to be understood that these are illustrations of the *kind* of oral work that second grade children should be trained to do. They are not put here as subject matter for children to be drilled upon and to repeat from memory.)

#### EXPERIENCES AT HOME.

I take care of the geranium.

I water it every day.

Yesterday I spilled some water on the floor.

The pitcher was too full.

#### NATURE.

Walter's garden is in the back yard.

He planted morning-glory seeds and tulip bulbs.

The morning-glory seeds have come up.

The tulips will be in blossom in a week.

#### GAMES.

There are swings on the Common.

I like to swing very much.

After I have been swinging for a while, I get out and give some one else a chance.

I have a little kitten.

Her name is Tricks.

Tricks is very cute.

She pulls at my shoe laces, and at my dress.

She always climbs up in my lap.

#### HOW TO TREAT A VISITOR.

Yesterday, we had a visitor in our room.

When she came in, Edith gave her a chair.

When we read, we did our best.  
We like to have people visit our class.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

My grandfather has some cows.  
When he talked Polish to them, they could understand him.  
They always answered moo.

My baby brother likes to play with the doorbell.  
He would not stop when I told him to.  
My mother came with a strap.  
Then he ran away.

My sister and I played millinery store.  
We trimmed two hats.  
Mine looked like a Quaker bonnet.

We have a stuffed squirrel.  
He has a nut in his paws.  
A boy asked me why I didn't eat it.  
I said because it had been there too long.

Charles gave me a book with samples of wall paper in it.  
Some of them are very pretty.  
I like the gold patterns best.

At Christmas time, we had two Christmas trees.  
After we got through with them, we put them in the garden.  
They looked very pretty after a snowstorm.

I have a little ring I had when I was two years old.  
It just fits my little finger.  
My mother wants me to keep it always.

On my way home I saw my shadow on the fence.  
I was afraid.  
I ran home as fast as my legs could carry me.

A boy told a girl that he could slide very well.

When he was saying this, he fell down.

How the girl did laugh !

(An effective use of the exclamation.)

Every time I whistle, my canary whistles after me.

He sings prettier than I do.

I would rather listen to him than sing myself.

#### IV. Common Errors of Speech.

The teacher should read over the chapter on "Common Errors of Speech" in the Appendix. She should also re-read the notes printed under this heading in the first grade. Keep in mind the groupings of the errors, as there explained, but do not discuss the "grammar" of them with the pupils. Study the list of errors in all the grades, but confine your work mostly to those of your grade and the grade below. They will keep you busy. Use some "language game" every day. You will find plenty of them in the chapter on "The Language Game" in the Appendix. If they do not suit you, make up some of your own. Language games may be played at any time during the day, — to fill up a few odd minutes here and there, or as a change after a period of concentrated work in number or phonics.

In the second grade, work on these errors :

We sung it.

We et it.

I writed my name.

My pencil is broke.

You was afraid.

I can't find it no place.

I ain't got no book.

I done it.

He knowed me.

I seen it.

It's tore.

We drawed a robin.

He hadn't ought to go.

He don't need a book.

He did it hisself.

Me and him went.

Them kind ain't good.

I got it off a him.  
Are they any school?  
Look't here.

He is the one what did it.  
He didn't give me none.  
I was to home.

I wash me own self.  
He would of gone.  
I hat to go.  
They was six hooks.

Gimme that pencil.  
I donno.  
I'm thinkin.

#### V. Comments and Cautions.

Avoid rousing self-consciousness by too many criticisms.

Insist on careful pronunciation of final syllables ending in *g*, *t*, *d*.

Remember that "so" and "then" are habits as bad as the "and" habit.

Banish the "run-on" sentence from your children's talk, if you can.

Teach children to drop the voice at the ends of their sentences.

#### PREPARATION FOR WRITING

At the beginning of the year, teachers should carefully test the ability of the children to use the alphabet seat-work.

They should see that their classes possess these powers:

1. Speedy handling of cards.
2. Placing letters right side up.
3. Correct spacing of words.
4. Making an even line across the desk.
5. Correct use of capital and period.
6. Correct spelling.

This may be accomplished by having children make sentences, copying the teacher's model on the blackboard.

The children should be taught to inspect their own work and correct their own errors before the teacher examines it. Before extending the work, she should make sure that every child has reasonable proficiency as described above.

Next, children should be required to make original sentences with letter-cards. In this work, the question of spelling is an important one. It has been demonstrated that children of Grade II have a much wider oral vocabulary than they can possibly be taught to spell. The only way to meet the difficulty is to encourage children to become responsible for the special words they wish to use.

Use the oral period for managing this. Ask each child to be ready with one sentence. As he gives it, require him to think of the spelling of each word. If there is one he cannot spell, suggest that some one at home may help him, or that his teacher will be willing to, provided he can't get help, but that he must come to her for help before or after school. At the beginning of the next session, have the oral sentences made with letter-cards, and inspect for the correctness of the vocabulary spelling in particular. The reading of sentences by individuals who have shown ability to spell unusual words or who have shown great effort to improve their own work is a strong incentive.

When children have ability to make one sentence in this manner, develop power to make two related sentences, then three. At each stage, insist upon technical correctness, independence in work, and upon the child's own inspection for errors.

Before passing to the next stage, that of *writing* the sentence, attention should be given to the elimination of certain weaknesses that are found in this grade. The first is that of *trite beginnings*. *I have* and *I like* are special offenders. Here is an illustration :

I have a dog.

His name is Jack.

He can do tricks.

Such sentences should not be accepted in this grade. There is nothing interesting or personal about the illustration. Suggest this correction: Tell your dog's name in the first sentence. Then describe one trick he does. We would like to hear something about him that is different from other dogs.

Beginnings like *last night, yesterday*, etc., should be ruthlessly refused. Don't allow them in any part of a composition unless they have some bearing on the narrative.

In the same way, refuse *trite endings*. It is better to have a child give two sentences only, if he makes a good point on two, than to have him finish with a foolish question or an "I like" sentence, as in the following:

I have a new doll.

She wears a pink dress.

*I like her very much.*

Criticise such productions after this fashion: "Of course you do. Every one likes a new doll or a gift of any sort. We can't be interested in that. Tell something about your doll that we *don't* know." Children in this grade become very keen in regard to flat beginnings and uninteresting endings. Here is an illustration of how a class helped to improve a foolish closing sentence:

A robin flew on my window sill.

I heard him sing "Cheer up!"

I think he was looking for worms.

This last sentence was refused by the teacher on the ground that birds don't look for worms on window sills. She asked the class to offer a more suitable ending. These three good ones were given:

I think he was looking for crumbs.

He looked like the one we drew in school.

I wish he would stay all day.



It is wise to continue letter-card work at the desk with such oral criticisms as are here described until the class is fairly proficient, for unless good habits of oral and desk construction have been formed, unless children have automatically become responsible for their own spelling, unless they have a fairly correct idea of what is desired in the way of compositions that are personal and interesting to others to listen to, it is a waste of time to begin the written work.

### WRITTEN WORK

(NOTE. — Written work in the second grade does not begin until the second half of the year. Only one-fifth of the language time is given to written work.)

#### I. Aim.

To have the written work grow naturally out of the oral work, using the improved and corrected sentences made with alphabet cards.

The written papers afford the teacher a new opportunity to discover tendencies and weaknesses of the class and of individuals, for it is difficult to listen and at the same time to judge of the interesting quality, the coherence, beginnings and endings, so as to make a helpful criticism at the end. A quiet time for reading enables her to discover papers that should be placed on the board for class inspection, some illustrating errors, others excellences. Children may thus be taught to criticise intelligently. They should see examples showing good beginnings and endings, unusual and specially fit words, and interesting talk. Weak compositions should be carefully selected and children should be taught to improve them as in the illustration given above. This use of the eye is helpful in training the ear to be critical.

Some teachers complain that their children have no originality and tend to choose the same subjects and say the same things that were said before. It is a human failing. We all do. But with

better teaching perhaps the next generation will do better. The most successful way is to make use of models.

This is the way one teacher did it :

TEACHER. My dolly has big blue eyes.  
I don't see them very often.  
She wants to sleep most of the time.

CHILD 1. I put my dolly to bed every night.  
It doesn't take me long.  
She is a sleepy head.

CHILD 2. I take my dolly to bed with me every night.  
I sing her to sleep.  
Sometimes I fall asleep first.

CHILD 3. My dolly's name is Virginia.  
Her cheeks are pink.  
Her eyes are blue.  
They can shut and open, too.

TEACHER. We have a cat in our house.  
She is a mother cat.  
She has six little kittens.  
My mother will give the kittens away.

CHILD 1. We have a cat at home.  
She is an old one.  
My mother likes her because she frightens the rats away.

CHILD 2. My cat is big and fat.  
She just eats and sleeps.  
She stays by the fire all day.  
My mother said she wished she could do that.

CHILD 3. My cat is a big black one.  
He isn't afraid of anything.  
He prowls around the house all day.  
When it gets dark, he goes in the back yard.  
He howls all night.

## II. Examples of Good Compositions on Familiar Subjects.

Here is a collection of cat and dog talks and some varied and interesting compositions on familiar subjects. Such subjects are good because they suggest personal experiences and develop keener observation of familiar objects.

My cat cried and woke me up.  
I took her into bed with me.  
She got black hairs all over the bed.

I tied a red ribbon around my cat's neck.  
I put a little bell on it.  
When she walks it tinkles.

My cat sleeps between my dog's legs.  
She looks as if she were in a bed of fur.  
She does not get frightened if he moves.  
She knows he is harmless.

My grandmother has three kittens.  
Two are brown and one is gray.  
I do not like the big brown one.  
She scratches whenever I touch her.

My cat got into my little brother's bed.  
He was afraid and cried.  
My mother did not know what the matter was.

I pulled a string around the room.  
I didn't know the cat was lying under the stove.  
He jumped out.  
That made me jump.

I put my baby's hat on my cat.  
I told my mother to look at her.  
She said I was as silly as the cat.

Once when I was going home a dog came up to me and said, "Bow  
wow."

I think he was saying, "Hello!"

My dog got his bath Monday.

When my mother was bathing him, he got her apron all wet.  
She had to change it.

There was a dog on our street.

He was sniffing in the snow.

I think he was looking for a bone.

My dog jumps on me when I come home from school.

He covers me with hairs.

I have to brush them off every day.

My dog Fido buries everything he finds.

My father left his pipe on the floor.

Fido found it and buried it in the cellar.

When I was going up the walk, I saw a black thing on the porch.  
I was afraid.

When I got upon the steps, I saw it was only my dog trying to get in.

I saw my first robin to-day.

He was on my window sill.

He looked like the one we drew in school.

This morning when I was going home I saw three robins.  
They were under a water spout getting a bath.

I was playing with my whip top.

I made it walk down the stairs.

It went down the whole flight.

My top is a ball bearing one.

I can spin it very well.

It can hum.

My top is green.  
I spin it every night.  
It hums like a bee.

My new top is red, white, and blue.  
It is a patriotic top.  
I like it because I am an American boy.

My sister bought a balloon.  
She blew it up very big.  
Then it burst.  
I told her she spent five cents for nothing.

Jimmy and I went fishing.  
We had only one hook.  
We caught three hornpouts.  
The last one swallowed the hook.  
What luck !

My father bought a liberty bond because he is an American citizen.

Antoinetta said her father would, but he has eleven children.

My doll's eyes are turned up at the corners.  
They are goo-goo eyes.  
She seems to be always laughing at me.

### III. Second Grade Written Standards.

The illustrations printed in the preceding section are good examples of the kind of "compositions" the majority of the pupils should be able to write *at the end of the second year*, if the teacher has faithfully followed the plan of the year's work.

No matter how excellent the teaching, there will always be a few pupils in every class whose compositions will lack the interesting

“touch” that appears in most of the preceding illustrations. But no composition should be deficient in respect to sentence form, capitals, periods, and the spelling of the words in the special list for the grade. The teacher, however, should not be content with mere correctness in these elementary matters. She should work hard all the time to develop the children’s power to express themselves in an interesting way.

#### IV. Words for Special Spelling Drill.

Note:— Re-read the chapter on “Correct Spelling of Common Words” in the Introduction (pp. 45–46).

again	knew	their
any	know	there
asked	leaving	they
buy	loving	too
can’t	making	tried
coming	many	using
cried	much	very
does	near	want
don’t	off	went
dropped	once	when
drowned	only	where
fairy	running	which
first	school	whole
goes	shining	whose
having	some	won’t
heard	sure	write
higher	taking	wrote

#### V. Comments and Cautions.

Keep the sentence simple. If you do, “and” and “but” and “so” will not have a chance to get rooted in the child’s written lan-



guage. It is bad enough to have to deal with them in his oral language.

The amount of writing in the second grade should be limited to three or four sentences. It is bad business to permit children to write much before their experience in writing is sufficient to save them from a multitude of errors.

Encourage free expression in the writing. Praise every sign of originality.

One good closing sentence, expressing, no matter how whimsically, some bit of childish reflection upon the subject he is writing about is worth more than reams of the flat, formal products which for years have passed as "compositions." But this originality must be developed hand in hand with accuracy in all the mechanics of sentence writing.

### THIRD GRADE

#### ORAL

*(Four-fifths of the language time in the third grade is given to oral work.)*

#### I. Aims.

To secure more orderly talking than in previous grades; to keep to the point.

To teach children to think a sentence through before speaking it.

To form the habit of speaking every word distinctly, of making one's self heard, of using a natural tone of voice.

To train the pupils to be good listeners.

#### II. Suggested Sources.

##### HOME LIFE.

Topics bearing upon helpfulness at home, and in all relations with playmates, younger children, the old and feeble, animals; matters of personal appearance and conduct.

## COMMUNITY LIFE.

The development of civic pride; ways of helping the street, fire, and health departments; ways of preventing accidents on the street, on street cars; ways of preventing quarreling at play; how to be a good neighbor; behavior in public places.

## NATURE LIFE.

Observation of seasonal change in nature, bird and animal life. The teacher who loves nature and knows intimately her work, or who will set herself to learn a little of it, has an exhaustless store of subjects for oral language, even though her pupils live in the most populous tenement district of a mill city.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

Saturday good times; Sunday walks at different seasons; description of toys; of pets; games played at home, at school, indoors, out of doors; the policeman, fireman, postman, and their work; the milkman, grocer, butcher, shoemaker, carpenter, and their work; directions for making something, for playing a game.

## III. Suggestions for Improvement of Compositions Offered by Children.

First, read the suggestions given in Grade II. The three points concerning criticism made for that grade are just as necessary in this grade, for children still begin weakly, still give trivial endings, and still have to be corrected for inserting useless references to the time an event took place.

Collect illustrations of such weaknesses as you run across them in the papers. In this grade the *I have* and *I like* are not so frequently found, but the need of pruning and condensing is still pressing. Here are some examples:

My dog is black and white. Every day when I go home he is waiting for me. When I play tag he runs after me. He is a playful dog.

The first sentence is poor because it does not make a good "opening" for the following sentences. The last sentence is useless, for we already know the dog is playful.

My father, mother, sisters and I were going to Haverhill one day. We were on the electric car. A lady got on the car. The seats were filled. My father got up and gave the lady his seat.

See how much this is improved by condensing :

We were on the electric car. A lady got on. All seats were filled. My father gave the lady his seat.

The point is that the father was courteous.

Sunday I went for an automobile ride. We went from Beverly to Ipswich, from Ipswich to Hamilton, from Hamilton to North Andover home.

Such a catalogue of places is interesting to no one but the talker. He should be told so.

I went for a ride Monday night to Lynn. I saw my grandmother and a little boy named Harris. I played with him all the evening long till I came home to Lawrence. We could not unlock the door with the key so my father climbed in the window. That was great fun.

The last two sentences are the only ones containing any interest to the listener or the reader.

In my room we have a flag. We have the names of the flowers on the board. We have China poppies in a glass. We have a very pretty picture on the wall.

Too many things are mentioned. The second sentence or the last one might be developed interestingly.

My aunt has a little baby. Her name is Mildred. Her birthday is next month. I am going to get her a little dress and a pair of slippers. I am going to take her out.

This would be good if the second and the last sentences were struck out.

Following is a record of two lessons with a class on improvement of *endings*. The composition about a kitten was put on the board and the teacher asked for a better closing sentence. The six that follow show that the class caught the idea.

Last night we left the window open. My kitten got out of the window. In the morning we wondered where she was. She came back again.

- No. 1. We thought she was lost.
2. Maybe she was out hunting for a mouse.
  3. She was waiting for us to open the door.
  4. She went to the next house.
  5. We found she was in the barn.
  6. She was playing with the kitten in the next house.

This composition about the pigeons was treated in the same way.

Near my house there are some pigeons. They came to my piazza. I gave them some crumbs. They ate them.

- No. 1. When they eat a crumb, they look around to see if any one is coming.
2. They take it in their bills and carry it away.
  3. I think they are tame to come on my piazza.
  4. I think they'll come all summer.
  5. If I do not scare them away they will come all summer.
  6. They eat out of my hand because they are tame.
  7. They didn't leave a crumb, because they were hungry.
  8. When I move away, I'll be sorry to leave them.

#### IV. Examples of Oral Composition.

It is to be understood that these examples are to be considered as illustrations only. They are not to be used as material for memorizing or for imitating in too slavish a fashion. They are put here as suggestions to teachers, and not as subject matter for children.

##### HOME LIFE.

This morning was the first time I drove my uncle's horse. When I took him back to the barn and gave him some hay, he jumped. I think he jumped for joy.

##### SCHOOL LIFE.

I told Miss Stone I hadn't a story ready this morning. She said I had better think of one. I am thinking and thinking but nothing will come. I have to talk just the same.

##### COMMUNITY LIFE.

When I cross the street, I walk to the corner first. I look both ways. If a car or an auto is coming, I wait until it passes.

My letter carrier wears a gray suit with brass buttons. He carries a leather bag over his shoulder. In this bag he puts the mail. He blows a whistle when he comes to the door.

##### SATURDAY GOOD TIMES.

My cousin and my family were doing tricks. I asked who could make a needle sail on water. No one knew how to do it. I showed them. I felt like a hero.

##### SOMETHING TO MAKE.

Do you know how to make a Jack-o-lantern? Take a big yellow pumpkin and cut off the top. Scoop out the inside clean. Then cut the eyes, nose, and mouth. Put a lighted candle inside, and put the top on again.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

There was a nest in my yard. My brother took the eggs and broke them. I felt sorry for them, but what could I do to him?

I have a donkey on my farm. I tried to wash him. He gave me a kick. He washes himself now.

## V. Errors of Speech.

The teacher should re-read the chapter on "Common Errors of Speech" in the Appendix, and the notes under this heading in the grades below and above her own. The grouping is the same always: (1) verb errors, (2) pronoun errors, (3) colloquialisms, (4) mispronunciations, but the teacher is not to mention grammatical distinctions. Right use of language comes from *habit*, not from knowledge of terms or rules. Speech forms come to the child largely *through the ear*. Repetition fixes the habit of speech, whether it be good or bad. Speech is a matter of the spinal cord rather than of the mind. When the child said, "Can I have a piece of pie?" "May I!" corrected the mother. Then the child said, "May I have a piece of pie?" and the mother answered "Yes, you can." The knowing mind said "may," the spinal cord said "can"; therefore the tongue said "can."

The "language game" (see Appendix) is the most effective method of getting the right forms to "sound right" to the child. Use the games every day, but do not work a few of them to death. When the "game" spirit wears off, half the good is gone.

I done it.  
I et the apple.  
I seen him take it.  
Leave him do it.  
I ain't got no book.  
He don't know.  
Has John went yet?

I seen it.  
That ain't mine.  
He never give me a pen.  
My pencil is broke.  
I trun the core away.  
She brung it to school.  
You was down there.



Here is yourn.  
 Me aunt is sick.  
 I'm after doing my work.  
 Do like I did.  
 These kind are bad.  
 This is the boat what I went on.

Him and me done it.  
 Them are mine.  
 Can I get a pen off him?  
 I was to school.  
 I am all better.  
 I can't find it nowhere.  
 See what you're at.

My mother is worsen.  
 The boy was almost drowned.  
 My teacher's name is Mrs. . . .

Be you a-goin' ?  
 Gimme a cent.  
 I was late, 'cause I went to  
 the store.

They was nobody to be seen.

I hurted me.

## VI. Comments and Cautions.

The teacher should do as little talking as possible. The exercise is not to train her, but her pupils.

Get rid of the "stringy" sentence.

The oral language period is not for entertainment, but for the training in language power. All children, therefore, should take part, not merely the voluble children or those who are naturally good talkers.

Never let the conversation drag aimlessly to no destination. As soon as interest begins to fail, the topic has served its purpose, and another should be taken.

It is of no use to say good things unless one speaks loud enough to be heard.

Fault-finding and interruption to correct errors discourage. Sympathy and patience bring improvement from the slowest.

Remember that it is not enough for a child to say another's work is "good," "interesting," or "I like it." He must tell *why*. Expect every child to listen attentively, that he may be able to speak definitely of the work done.

Constant practice in oral expression in the lower grades will make the correct formal expression on paper later a comparatively easy task, for the child who has learned to think clearly — and no one can talk intelligently without thinking clearly — will find little difficulty in mastering the mechanical art of putting that thought into writing.

Teach your children to drop the voice at the end of the sentence.

#### WRITTEN

*(Only one-fifth of the language time in the third grade is given to written work.)*

##### I. Aims.

To make the written work a natural outgrowth of the oral work by having children write sentences prepared by the class and teacher in the previous oral lesson.

Using these sentences as models, to develop power to produce *original* work on similar topics.

To develop power to write *independently* a few interesting sentences on a given topic.

To make habitual the correct use of the technicalities assigned to the grade.

##### II. Lines of Work.

Independent, original writing should be the strong objective this year. At first the work may be based upon models worked out by class and teacher in coöperation.

The points emphasized in oral composition for this grade (omission of useless details, good endings, etc.) should be made much of in the written work. The blackboard is of great value as a means of impressing these important matters upon the minds of pupils.

Toward the end of the year much blackboard composition should be done by the pupils themselves. Several should be sent to the board at one time. The customary preparation should be omitted. The direction should be: "Think your sentences out carefully and write them when you are ready." In this way the responsibility for producing well-constructed and interesting work lies wholly with the writer, and a fair judgment may be formed as to his possession of sentence feeling, spelling power, and other technicalities.

### III. Suggested Topics.

The topics for oral composition suggested for this grade are equally suitable for the written work. The teacher is therefore referred to the second section of the oral outline for this grade.

### IV. Technicalities.

*Capital letter* beginning sentences, names of persons, of places, days of the week, months of the year, the name of the state, the city, of the child's own school.

*Period* at the end of a telling sentence, after the abbreviations of names of days, of months; after Mr., Mrs., St., Mass.

*Question mark* after questions.

*Exclamation mark* after exclamations.

### V. Words for Special Spelling Drill.

(The words in italics are repeated from the second grade list.)

*asked*  
*buy*

*making*  
*shining*

*went*  
*when*

*coming*  
*dropped*  
*fairy*  
*heard*  
*know*

*their*  
*there*  
*they*  
*too*  
*tried*

*which*  
*whose*  
*write*  
*wrote*

afraid  
all right  
almost  
already  
always  
beginning  
busy  
children  
clothes  
color  
doctor  
early  
easy  
enough  
father

February  
forty  
friend  
great  
guess  
its  
laughed  
lose  
loose  
money  
month  
none  
often  
people  
please

quite  
right  
Saturday  
speak  
though  
together  
truly  
Tuesday  
until  
Wednesday  
whose  
women  
would  
writing

## VI. Written Standards.

The following paragraphs are thought to represent a fair standard of the kind and quality of written composition that should be expected of children at the end of the third grade. They are all based upon topics which have been suggested as practicable for this grade. No one of the paragraphs contains more than five short sentences. Every paragraph contains a bit of personal interest.

A few children will not be able to write as well as the standard. But the majority of every third grade class should *at the end of that year* be able to write a paragraph of the character and length of those printed here, composed of sentences grammatically complete, correctly capitalized and punctuated, and free from mis-

spelled words. They should be able to do this without oral preparation. The first writing, it should be understood, is the measure of the pupil's power. The corrected and rewritten copy is worthless as a standard of ability.

#### HOME.

Mother has been away a whole week. It is very lonesome without her. I wish she would come home.

This is Mother's birthday. After breakfast we gave her our presents. Mine was a pretty bookmark. I made it in school.

#### SCHOOL.

Yesterday afternoon we played school. We all wanted to be the teacher. So we agreed to draw lots. I was the lucky one.

Last Friday we had a spelling match. I spelled "beginning" wrong. I shall never spell it wrong again.

Sometimes my teacher lets me stay after school. I clean the blackboard for her. I put the books in a neat pile.

The story I like the best is the Twelve White Ducks. It tells about the twelve princesses who were changed into twelve white ducks. The Prince found them and saved their lives. Then they became princesses as they were before.

#### IN GENERAL.

Once I was going for a walk. I saw a pony in the road. I gave him some hay. After he had eaten the hay he bowed his head. That's the way he thanked me.

Our dog is the cutest dog you ever saw. He has long white curly hair. He sits on my father's desk all the time. He is a bluff dog made of cloth.

I came in school with dirty hands. Miss —— told John not to give me a book because my hands were dirty. I come clean now.

This is how we play "Squirrel." First our teacher chooses a squirrel. Then we all put our heads on the desk. Next, the squirrel taps some child on the head. That child tries to catch the squirrel.

I saw something bright lying in the gutter. It looked just like a nickel. I stopped and picked it up. It was only a tin tag.

### VII. Comments and Cautions.

In each grade stress is put upon a few things. The teacher should make sure that these are positively and usefully known. Succeeding teachers must not let this knowledge and habit lapse.

The fact that in the third grade the sentences are for the first time cast into the form of a paragraph, instead of each new sentence starting on a new line will tend to produce "the child's error" (see chapter on "The Sentence" in Part One) upon the part of children who have not yet the "sentence habit" strongly established. Teachers in this grade must, therefore, make a good deal of this fundamental thing in writing English. The sentence idea, or sentence sense, is not an easy one for some children to get. Children must be taught early to distinguish between a sentence and a group of words that is not a sentence. There is no need of lugging in grammar to teach the distinction. It is the *thought* that tells the child what a sentence is, not subjects and predicates and other grammatical considerations.

Pupils cannot too early be taught the habit of looking over all written work before handing it in, in order to correct their mistakes.



## FOURTH GRADE

## ORAL

*(Three-fourths of the language time in the fourth grade is given to oral work.)*

## I. Aims.

Pupils who have had three years' training in oral composition according to the method definitely worked out in this Course of Study will enter the fourth grade not only willing but eager to talk. This very eagerness for self-expression, to which a considerably increased range of experience gives added impetus, creates the need of carefully limiting the length of compositions and of curbing a tendency on the part of children to introduce too many details into their compositions. These things are essential:

1. To limit the oral compositions to four or five sentences.
2. To train pupils to select a particular "phase" of their subject and to "tie up" every sentence to that.
3. To teach pupils, through the daily criticism of their oral compositions, to distinguish between that which adds to the interest of the particular "point" they are making in their compositions and that which adds nothing to the interest of it. They should be taught to realize that a sentence that doesn't *add* anything to the interest of the "story" is not only useless but *takes away* from the excellence of it.

Continue to work for better beginnings and endings, following the suggestions made upon this point in third-grade work. Train pupils to think of beginnings and endings before they stand on their feet to present their oral composition.

Insist on clean-cut enunciation in all talking. Teach your pupils these fundamental things:

- (1) To open their mouths when they speak.
- (2) To speak in a clear, low voice — low in the sense of being in the natural register of the child's voice, not in the high-pitched

“schoolroom” tone — yet loud enough to be heard distinctly in all parts of the room.

(3) To sound final *g*'s, *t*'s, *d*'s and *th*'s, and to take pains to pronounce correctly such words as “children,” “this afternoon,” etc.

## II. Examples of Oral Composition.

These actual fourth-grade compositions indicate the kind of work pupils should be able to do at the end of the year.

### SHE WAS REAL

My brother and I saw Baby Alice, the big fat girl, in the circus last week. My brother said she was stuffed and I said she wasn't. To prove it I bumped into her and found that I was right.

### THE SURPRISE

This morning I woke up at five o'clock. I hurried and dressed so I could surprise mother and father when they got up. When I went out into the kitchen they were there all dressed. It was a surprise to me instead of to them.

### ONCE IS ENOUGH

Two or three days ago my mother told me I could go to Clara's house next week to a party. I spoke of it again this noon. She told me she didn't know whether I could go or not. I made a mistake when I asked her the second time.

### A POOR VACATION FOR ME

During vacation my sister is going to work. I will have to keep house in her place. I wish vacation would never come this year. I would rather go to school one hundred years than keep house one day.

## III. Common Errors of Speech.

The teacher who has studied the lists of error in the grades below the fourth (as she ought to do) will find many of them repeated here. As is shown in the introduction to the chapter on

"The Language Game" (see Appendix), the errors children make in their speech, like their errors in spelling, are really few. A dozen verbs, for example, are responsible for one-sixth of all the errors made in their speech. There is only one way to overcome these errors and that is to expose children for some period every day to the sound of right form. They must say it and hear it, over and over again. Correct speech in young children is a matter of the *ear*. Don't waste time in trying to show *why* this form is right and the other wrong. Use the language game freely. These games should be short and lively. They should never run over five minutes. They should be so devised as to give every pupil a chance to use as many times as possible the correct form chosen for the day's practice.

I done it.  
He come back.  
We drawed a bird's nest.  
I brung it to him.  
There was about seven boys there.  
He trun it to me.  
We have saw them.

Them are easy.  
He can't run as fast as me.

Can I get a book off Mary?  
My sister learned me to sew.  
Where shall I bring them to?  
The baby got sick on us.  
Sing it like John does.  
Can I have a drink?

Ketch the ball  
Lemme have that.  
I c'n git it.

I seen it.  
Where was you?  
My book is tore.  
It ain't so.  
My pencil is broke.  
You hadn't ought to do it.  
That don't make me laugh.  
Look what I done to that paper.

They are wrong theirselves.  
Me and Frank will go.

John stayed at home.  
She sits in back of me.  
Leave me do it.  
Where are you at?  
She never does nothin'.  
He be's always whispering to me.

They was an old man there.  
Are they any school?

#### IV. Comments and Cautions.

The child learns to talk correctly by talking under careful direction, just as he learns to read by reading, and to write by writing. There must, therefore, be daily systematic, persistent, and patient training in talking in every grade from the first to the eighth.

If in the arithmetic class a child should say, " $2 \times 3$  are 5," would his teacher say "6" and pass on? Then why when a boy says, "We come home last night," should she say *sotto voce*, "We came home," and let the matter pass at that? The boy is so intent upon his thought that he repeats what his teacher says without mental reaction, and unless something is done later to rescue the correction from that indefinite region known as the subconsciousness, the teacher may as well save her breath. If she does not wish to interrupt him while he is talking, she certainly must take time at the first free moment to go back to his error and require a correction. If the mistake is one he habitually makes, some scheme must be devised to keep him conscious and watchful, for nothing short of eternal vigilance will eradicate the evil.

It is a more difficult thing to judge the excellence of spoken language than that of written language, because the impression of the former is so fleeting and so intangible. The teacher must, therefore, train herself to keep one ear open to the *style* of the pupil speaking, while the other is engaged in listening to the *things* he has to say. If every teacher could once or twice a year have a stenographer take down the oral compositions of her class and put them into type for her exactly as they were spoken, it would help her teaching of oral language more than anything else in the world.

The teacher must do everything she can to take away the self-consciousness of her pupils. She should be quick to find signs of power as well as evidence of weakness.

Time should not be wasted in aimless, haphazard talk.

Look out for the "rising inflection."

### WRITTEN

*(One-fourth of the language time in the fourth grade is given to written work.)*

#### I. Aims.

The various lines of work suggested for the third year should be carried forward. The paragraphs should grow slightly in length and give evidence of a little growth in the sequence and connection of the sentences. The quantity of the writing must not be permitted to increase at the expense of correctness. It is better to have a paragraph of four good sentences, than one of twice the number carelessly done. Remember that the written work forms but a very small part of the language work of this grade, and be sure that the oral work is never slighted to gain time for perfecting the written work.

Here for the first time *the letter* is introduced, and it is to hold a very important place in the written work of the grade. A discussion of letter writing in school and a number of models of letters will be found under the proper section of the year's work.

Children should all the time increase in their mastery of the mechanics of written work and in their capacity to criticise their own composition.

#### II. Lines of Work.

##### 1. SENTENCES.

Much care should be taken to hammer home "the sentence idea," which is so fundamental in writing. Either it is a difficult thing for some children to get, or we have neglected to teach it, or we have taught it poorly, for a great many children in the upper grammar grades do not seem to know when one sentence ends and the next one begins. Or, if they know, they have not

yet "got the habit" of beginning their sentences with a capital and ending them with a period.

It is both unnecessary and unwise to confuse fourth-grade children by introducing the grammar of the sentence. The idea of the completed thought is all-sufficient.

## 2. PARAGRAPH COMPOSITIONS.

The standard paragraphs printed in the Grade III outline suggest the kind of original composition work that should be continued this year. Keep the sentences simple and the paragraphs short.

Fourth-grade paragraphs should be free from the misspelling of the common words upon which special drill has been given from the first grade up.

## 3. LETTERS.

The letter is the only kind of composition that every child will have to write after he leaves school. For that reason the school should give much practice in letter writing. If the children who leave the grammar school cannot write a correct letter, our work in written composition is a joke.

In the interests of teaching economy, one form of the friendly letter, one form of the business letter, and one form for addressing the envelope are printed in an Appendix to this course, which are to be used by all teachers in all the grades, regardless of their personal preferences or predilections. After the children leave school, they may modify this form as much as they like, but while they are in school they should be required to conform to the school standard.

The form, or arrangement, of the letter is a matter wholly separate from the writing of the letter itself. It is a matter of pure technique and should be taken up as such. Thus, a letter



should be placed on the board, or hektographed, and the attention of the pupils called to the mechanical placing of the several parts. After sufficient study, the letter should be *copied* by the pupils. The letters that the teacher puts before the children for study of the form should be models of letter writing as well as of correctness of mechanical arrangement. The body of the letters so used should be short (not more than four or five sentences in the fourth grade), but they ought to read like real letters from real children. You will find some letters of this sort later on in this section. Nothing should be said about the body of these letters at this time, but the children will catch the spirit of them without comment from the teacher. Later on, these same letters, or others, should be *dictated* to test the children's knowledge of the form. All models presented to children should conform strictly in arrangement and punctuation to the standard letter form adopted for this course of study.

When the form has been well taught, the work of writing *original* letters should begin. It is the almost universal experience of teachers that the letters which children write in school are painfully unnatural and uninteresting. That is because they have usually no real letter to answer, no real person to write to, and no reason or desire at that particular time to write any kind of a letter to anybody. It is a horrible example of the necessity of "having to say something" instead of the satisfaction of "having something to say." So far as it is possible, therefore, the letters written in school should be real letters to real people. Otherwise, the motive is wanting, and the letters, while they may be even uncomfortably correct in respect to form, are likely to be painfully artificial and dull. In order to get the effect of realism, teachers should therefore contrive some scheme of actual correspondence. The resourceful teacher does not need to be told how.

Only friendly letters are undertaken in the fourth grade. *These should contain one paragraph only.* They should have to do with

interesting occurrences at home, in school, on holidays, or special occasions; with invitations to share good times; with appreciation of pleasures shared; with sympathy for sickness or mishaps. The following letters may be helpful to teachers as illustrations of the sort of letters fourth-grade children ought to be able to write at the end of the school year. The full letter form is not carried out in these illustrations.

Dear Mary,

I am taking piano lessons. I practice one hour every day. I can play a waltz. Come over Saturday and hear it.

Your cousin,

.....

Dear John,

A week from to-day will be my birthday. I am to have a party at four o'clock. I wish you would come.

Your friend,

Fred.

Dear Fred,

I cannot be at your birthday party because I am going away with Father. I shall not be home again for a week. You know how sorry I am to miss the fun.

Your friend,

John.

My dear Miss Brown,

I have been very sick for the last month, and the doctor says I cannot go back to school for quite a while. I am very lonely sometimes. Will you please send me the names of some good books? I should like something like "Little Women."

Your affectionate pupil,

.....

Dear Aunt,

Our teacher has just taught us to write a letter. I shall write one to you every week. We have learned the first verse of "America." I know every word of it. Would you like to see how well I can write it?

Your loving niece,

.....

Dear Frank,

John told us this morning that you are in bed with a bad cold. I hope the doctor is not making you take medicine. I hate to take medicine. We began a new story in class yesterday. The name is "The Blue Bird." Perhaps your mother will get it and read it to you. I know you will like it.

Your friend,

.....

### III. Technicalities.

There are very few written technicalities required in this course of study. Those that are required should be thoroughly taught, and plenty of opportunity given to use them in writing.

1. *Capitals*. Beginning names of holidays, of local geographical names. First word of every line of poetry.

2. *Punctuation marks* used in the writing of dates, letter headings, etc.

3. *Abbreviations*. Those used in letter writing.

4. *Contractions*. Isn't, didn't, wasn't, I've, won't, can't, wouldn't, and others occurring in common use.

5. *Letter form*. Arrangement on paper; indention of first line.

### IV. Words for Special Spelling Drill.

(Review words are printed *in italics*.)

*all right*  
*afraid*

*February*  
*forty*

*shining*  
*their*

<i>almost</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>there</i>
<i>already</i>	<i>guess</i>	<i>they</i>
<i>always</i>	<i>having</i>	<i>too</i>
<i>beginning</i>	<i>heard</i>	<i>tried</i>
<i>busy</i>	<i>laughed</i>	<i>truly</i>
<i>color</i>	<i>lose</i>	<i>until</i>
<i>clothes</i>	<i>much</i>	<i>using</i>
<i>coming</i>	<i>people</i>	<i>which</i>
<i>doctor</i>	<i>quiet</i>	<i>whose</i>
<i>dropped</i>	<i>quite</i>	<i>women</i>
<i>early</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>writing</i>
<i>enough</i>		
<i>aloud</i>	<i>honest</i>	<i>ready</i>
<i>also</i>	<i>hoping</i>	<i>really</i>
<i>among</i>	<i>hour</i>	<i>receive</i>
<i>because</i>	<i>instead</i>	<i>rough</i>
<i>becoming</i>	<i>just</i>	<i>spoonful</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>learned</i>	<i>stopped</i>
<i>bicycle</i>	<i>losing</i>	<i>straight</i>
<i>built</i>	<i>meant</i>	<i>tired</i>
<i>business</i>	<i>minute</i>	<i>touched</i>
<i>carriage</i>	<i>ninety</i>	<i>through</i>
<i>caught</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>used to</i>
<i>choose</i>	<i>perhaps</i>	<i>weather</i>
<i>early</i>	<i>pieces</i>	<i>wholly</i>
<i>easily</i>	<i>pleasant</i>	<i>written</i>
<i>fourth</i>	<i>quietly</i>	<i>wrong</i>

#### V. Comments and Cautions.

To teach one thing for which the pupil is ever after responsible, then another thing plus the first, then a third plus the first and second, is the surest way of getting somewhere.

It is very important that the pupil shall read his composition through before handing it in. By this means he will discover many common errors, such as omissions of words, misspelled words, incorrect punctuation, and the repetition of the same word.

He should be taught to cultivate the power of imagining how it will sound when read aloud.

The fourth-grade teacher should begin to transfer the burden of criticism from her own shoulders to those of her pupils. But the criticism of one another's work by the pupils must always be controlled and directed by the teacher. Children must be made to understand

(1) That criticism deals with merits as well as faults.

(2) That criticism of one another's work should always be given to *help* one another.

(3) That the pupil must regard his fellow critics as his friends, not his enemies.

In all oral and written composition the blackboard is most useful. By means of it the oral expression is visualized, making pleasing features more emphatic, while faulty ones are recorded, to be changed again and again until satisfactory.

## VI. Written Standard.

At the end of the year a fourth-grade pupil of average ability ought to be able, without oral preparation or other assistance from the teacher, to write a paragraph something like the following:

### SAD NEWS

We had a letter from my uncle yesterday telling us that he was wounded very badly in the war. He said he thought he would never see home again. Mother cried when she read the letter. I wish the war would stop before it makes any more people cry.

The paragraph should be upon some *single item* of personal experience. The number of sentences should not exceed four. They should be simple sentences, grammatically complete, and correctly punctuated. All words in the special drill list of this and preceding grades should be correctly spelled.

## FIFTH GRADE

## ORAL

*(Two-thirds of the language time in the fifth grade is given to oral work.)*

## I. Aims.

By the time children have reached the fifth grade these things should have become "bred in the bone":

- (1) That it is a desirable thing to be able to speak good English.
- (2) That one should speak slowly and distinctly and with sufficient "carry" to the voice to make oneself heard in all parts of the classroom.
- (3) That while talking one should stand erect and away from the desk.

Give frequent drills in enunciation like those suggested in the Appendix. It does not make much difference what drills are used, or what words are practiced upon. The value of such drills lies in the suggestion that work of this sort sets going in the pupil's mind. Poor enunciation is, for the most part, a matter of ignorance. Children don't know any better. They speak as they hear others around them speak. When it isn't due to ignorance, it is due to laziness. Some children and many grown people who know better are too lazy to enunciate their words clearly. It is too much bother. Most children, though, if taken early enough and shown the difference between distinct utterance and the slouchy manner of speech which so many of them, boys particularly, are prone to adopt, will respond to the teacher's efforts to set up for her class a high standard of enunciation. It is not enough, however, for teachers to *talk* about good enunciation. *The only way for children to learn to enunciate clearly is to have plenty of practice in clear enunciation.* (See enunciation drills in Appendix, pp. 148-149.) This is where the drill is useful — not because of the particular sounds the drill contains, but



because it often awakens in children their first realization of what slipshod habits of enunciation they have grown into without knowing it. If children could learn no more than to sound their final consonants, their whole speech would be transformed. This much, at least, should be achieved in the fifth grade.

Continue the work of developing the pupils' power through the daily practice to compose interesting oral paragraphs. Follow the suggestions contained in the fourth-grade aims (p. 86).

Remember that the oral period is much more effective in teaching the fundamentals of composition than an equal length of time spent in written work.

Be careful to permit no long paragraphs, and work constantly against the tendency of children of this age to wander from the point of their subject and to introduce trivial or irrelevant details into their paragraphs.

It is now time to begin to teach pupils to select for the subjects of their paragraphs *a better type of experience* than that which young children commonly resort to. Children need to be shown what the true meaning of "experience" is. They must be shown the difference between the "experience" which takes place *outside* of the pupil and the "experience" that takes place *inside* of him. An "experience" is not the event witnessed or participated in; it is *the effect on the judgment or the feelings* produced by an event witnessed or participated in. The reporter who writes a newspaper paragraph on an automobile accident is not writing an "experience" of his own, although he may even have been an eye-witness of the accident, because he is simply writing a "story" of the affair from an entirely *impersonal* point of view. The fault of too many compositions, even on "experience" subjects, is that they are too *impersonal* — bare recitals of trivial facts without a word to show what was the writer's *own state of mind* during or after the "experience" narrated. The teacher's most effective means of showing children the difference between that which is true "experience" and that which is only "near-experience" is

*abundant illustration.* Thus, the two following paragraphs (from two eighth-grade pupils) make a good example of the point under discussion.

### A FOREST FIRE

One day while out in the woods with two chums we smelt smoke, and not far away saw it rising slowly over the trees. We ran to the place and found a bad fire started. We each took a small branch and attacked the fire with energy. Our efforts to put out the fire were futile, so we decided to send the fastest runner back home to tell the fire department. While he was away the fire gained headway, and by the time the fire engine came it was burning fiercely. The firemen made short work of it with their tanks of chemicals.

### WORTH MORE THAN MARKS

When my history notebook was handed back to me I wondered what my mark would be. With shaky hands I opened the cover. On a sheet of paper inside were the words, "Very good" and underneath the teacher had written, "A notebook that it is a pleasure to correct." I tell you those few words were worth more to me than all the "very goods" I ever got. I think every girl would rather have her teacher write a little word of praise on her paper than to put down on it the highest mark there is.

Both of these paragraphs are well written. Both set forth a "personal experience" — in the sense that both relate a situation in which the writer was an important sharer. In the first paragraph we get indirectly some notion of the writer's feelings and of his intelligence and spirit. But at best it is a narrative of events. In no way does it compare, *as a piece of self-expression*, with the second paragraph, which lets us into the very heart of the writer. The first paragraph represents a type of composition immeasurably superior to the wooden sort of writing still common in many schools. Most teachers would be inclined even now to be satisfied with it. But the teacher who wishes to make a complete success

of the method of teaching composition this book prescribes must cease to be satisfied until her pupils write not about things that happen *to others*, but about things that happen to *themselves*, — not about cut fingers or broken arms, but about their interests, wishes, hopes, discouragements, disappointments, successes, failures, ambitions, aspirations, likes, dislikes, cares, troubles, difficulties, rewards, punishments, satisfactions, regrets, resolves, — and the thousand and one other things that children experience every day of their lives and quite as poignantly as we grown-up people do.

## II. Examples of Oral Composition.

These examples suggest something of the style of oral composition to be aimed for in the fifth grade. They show a slight advance over the selections representing fourth-grade oral composition, but are still simple and childlike.

There is no dearth of material for oral composition. The range is as wide as the experiences of the children. They must be shown, however, how to handle their simple themes in such a way as to make them interesting to those who listen to them. This is not an easy thing to do, but it affords opportunity for the best kind of training. The chief thing to impress upon children is that they must not talk about a string of things in their oral compositions, but that *they must select some single point*, and, as it were, “elaborate” it. The examples which follow show commendable intent to do this very thing. They illustrate, too, the better type of “experience” subject — the kind in which the child expresses *his own thoughts and opinions*, and gives *his own interpretation* of what he observes. They were taken from the work of fifth-grade children.

### WHAT THE STOREKEEPER SAID

Mother sent me to the store for a can of pineapple. When I got there I forgot the name of it. The storekeeper told me if I ever forgot again he'd throw me in the pickle barrel. A lady customer said I would make a big fat juicy pickle.

## BURIED TREASURE

Theodore and I buried some treasures. We dug a hole about fifteen inches deep. We put into it an old nail file, two cents, and a secret sign. I wonder what they will look like when we dig them up a year from now.

## NOT SO BRAVE AFTER ALL

My little brother Harold told us that he was going to be a soldier. He said that he wasn't afraid of anybody. When the gas man came in, he hit Harold on the head with some bills. Harold ran and hid in the closet until the gas man had gone. When he came out my mother remarked that he would make a great soldier.

## NO CATS WANTED

When I went out to water my garden last evening whom should I see sitting among my radishes but my cat. She does not like to get wet, so I sprinkled water all over her until she scampered away. I guess that taught her not to sit in my garden again.

## GETTING READY

During the summer vacation I am going to think up a lot of language "stories" so I can use them next term. I am going to have more than three sentences, if I can, for I think sixth grade compositions ought to have four or five. I am going to make up a supply of "stories" that will last until the end of the year.

## III. Common Errors of Speech.

The errors listed for correction in the fifth grade are practically the same as those assigned to the grades below. The kinds of errors common to the speech of children are few in number. But unfortunately they persist from infancy to old age. It is not possible to assign certain errors to certain grades, and let it go at that. The same old errors must be attacked all along the line.

The grouping into: (1) verb errors, (2) pronoun errors, (3) colloquialisms, and (4) mispronunciations has no significance beyond serving to remind the teacher (see Chapter on "Common Errors of Speech" in the Appendix) that verb errors form the largest proportion of spoken errors, with the other three groups of errors following in order of frequency. That chapter in the Appendix should be studied carefully by the teacher who desires to make an effectual campaign against these errors. She should on no account be led into the mistake of discussing with her pupils this technical classification of errors, or the worse mistake of discussing in this grade the grammatical principles violated in these errors. Grammar never caused any child to speak correct English. There is only one way to teach right forms, and that is to have children say them often enough to make the right form sound right.

Our piano is broke.

He hadn't ought to go.

You wasn't on the corner.

I come to Lawrence last week.

I've wrote my spelling long ago.

She is laying down.

He done it.

It ain't no use.

He seen more than you did.

He don't know his lesson.

Has the bell rang?

Them words are too hard.

Me and you will go.

I can write better than him.

I can copy it off the board.

They learn you to cook at that school.

Take your place in back of him.

My mother took sick.

It won't hurt nothin'.

I brung it home to my mother.

He was to his house.

She reads good.

They left him go.

Look where you're at.

The answer what you got is right.

The candy is et up.

They was a new book here.

Her ran ahead a' me.

Look at 'em.

Wait till I git me cap.

Watch me ketch it?

May I borry a knife?



## IV. Comments and Cautions.

It is quite remarkable to find how few complete sentences, each containing subject, predicate, and suitable modifiers, are exchanged between the ordinary teacher and her pupils. Presumably in every school directions, questions, and explanations are given; yet if teachers were to review their own language, they would probably be astonished to find how few sentences composed of well-chosen words they speak in a day. A sustained conversation between teacher and pupils is very unusual, frequently an unheard-of thing. Questions that are asked are generally elliptical in form, often they are expressed in single words, while the answers are very generally sent back by the children in single words or phrases, not infrequently by the monosyllables "yes" and "no."

The shorthand report of eighteen recitations in a New York school showed that out of 750 answers to the teachers' questions 420 were *one word* answers, and 100 more were phrase answers. What about the answers in *your* room?

Insist that when the child talks he stand erect *and free from his desk* and that whenever practicable he face the persons to whom he talks, as in ordinary conversation. This physical control of his body will, when it becomes a habit, help him to control his thinking and his talking.

Teach children the habit of dropping the voice at periods.

Keep the following cautions on the blackboard where the pupils can't help seeing them :

Stand up straight.  
Speak distinctly.  
Watch your English.  
Use short sentences.  
Stick to the point.  
Make it interesting.



Correct oral English may be realized in the language lesson only to be lost in the other periods of the daily program, unless the teacher carefully guards against any lapses by her pupils from the correct form until such time as right habits of expression impel them to use the correct forms without any conscious effort on their part. Pupils should learn that during the entire school day their statements should be grammatical and complete. The teacher should seldom supply part of the pupil's answer or statement.

The daily training in speaking before the class will in time enable the child to express his thoughts in the presence of others without nervous fear or a feeling of embarrassment. The results at first will often seem crude and unsatisfactory to the mature mind of the teacher; but if finally the child acquires a composed, pleasing, and forcible manner of speaking, the end is well worth the effort. If the issue is only self-control and self-poise, the time spent in the acquirement of these is time well expended.

At the close of every recitation, or at least once a day, serious mistakes in English should be definitely and forcibly corrected. If this is done in a mechanical way, in the same manner day after day, little will be accomplished. On the other hand, if the work is carried on with spirit and intelligence, much may be done for the pupil's English.

#### WRITTEN

*(One-third of the language time in the fifth grade is given to written work.)*

#### I. Aims.

Extend and strengthen the lines of work laid down in the previous grade.

*Sentence work* should still be restricted to the simple form of the sentence, except in the case of individuals who naturally write the longer sentence well. Those who do not should be pinned down to the short sentence until they show themselves able to

use the larger freedom judiciously. Below the seventh grade the child who has not natural language gifts loses himself in a complex or a compound sentence. All we need to get in the grammar school is clear and complete sentences, properly capitalized and punctuated. We cannot expect to get ease and grace. Those who go to the high school will get there all the style they want. Those who do not go to the high school will not need much English style to meet their writing needs in life. If any of them should later discover the need of style they will get it for themselves.

*The original paragraph work* should show a slight increase in length, and the beginnings of skill in the art of elaborating, so to speak, the simple themes upon which the pupils write. The first thing to learn in this art is to focus the thought upon some *single phase* of the theme selected and make the whole paragraph turn upon that. This is not an easy art to acquire, and it cannot be acquired in a single year. The lack of training in this respect is very noticeable in children's written themes. They write a dozen different things in a single paragraph, and consequently write nothing interesting about any one of the dozen things. The subject of "How I Help at Home" becomes a catalogue of duties from building the fire in the morning to washing the dishes after supper. Now, starting the fire in the morning is a theme full of possibilities for a composition paragraph, and washing the supper dishes is a theme not without opportunities for interesting (and possibly humorous) comment. Yet the great majority of children's compositions are of the *catalogue* type rather than of the *selective* type. Fifth-grade children are capable of grasping this *single phase idea*, and of working it out little by little in their themes, if they have the right kind of help and suggestion from the teacher. Much can be done toward this end in the oral composition work. Indeed, it is here that the foundation of written work is laid. If an oral composition is allowed to ramble over a variety of things, touching none of them interestingly, the written paragraphs will be no better in this respect.

*The letter* should form an important part of the written work. The standard form printed in an Appendix should be the unvarying standard in all grades. Follow the pattern of the model letters given for the fourth grade. These may be lengthened slightly, *but should not be more than one paragraph in length*. They should be of an informal, intimate type, simple, sincere, and jolly — such as real children would write to one another or to grown people of whom they are fond. Insist, however, that the form of the letter be strictly like the standard.

In the mastery of the *mechanics* and in the power to criticise their own work fifth graders should show steady growth.

## II. Technicalities.

The technicalities in this course are purposely kept few and simple. Teachers are not to teach anything that is not here indicated. Many of the “old favorites,” like the “comma in a series” and the comma after the name of a person addressed, have been intentionally omitted. You will notice, also, that quotation marks have not yet appeared.

If children use direct quotations in their written work, and leave out the marks, or use them wrong, don't worry about it. Let it pass unnoticed. There are many more important things to worry about. Quotation marks will be taught later on in the course, but only a very little time will be spent upon them. The use of quotation marks in the kind of writing that our boys and girls will be called upon to do after they leave school is very rare. It is an unimportant item upon which the school has been wasting much precious time. Teach thoroughly the few things you are told to teach, and leave the rest to somebody else.

1. *Capitals*. Titles of compositions ; addressing envelopes.
2. *Punctuation marks* required in letter forms, including the address on the envelope.
3. *Apostrophe* in possessive singular.

## III. Words for Special Spelling Drill.

Drill and test constantly upon the special spelling words assigned to each grade in this Course of Study. Nothing short of one hundred per cent accuracy should satisfy the teacher in the case of these "demons." Every spelling investigation that has been made has proved these to be the hardest words for children to learn to spell; and since they are words most frequently used they are responsible for the bulk of spelling errors in children's compositions. Give frequent tests, and keep a record of individual errors for comparison from test to test. Don't stop until one hundred per cent efficiency is achieved. Each grade, of course, should be able to spell all of the words that have appeared in earlier grades. Pay special attention to review words printed in *italics*.

(Review words are printed in *italics*.)

<i>all right</i>	<i>easily</i>	<i>their</i>
<i>all ready</i>	<i>enough</i>	<i>there</i>
<i>beginning</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>tired</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>heard</i>	<i>too</i>
<i>busy</i>	<i>know</i>	<i>truly</i>
<i>business</i>	<i>laughed</i>	<i>until</i>
<i>carriage</i>	<i>minute</i>	<i>weather</i>
<i>caught</i>	<i>people</i>	<i>women</i>
<i>color</i>	<i>quiet</i>	<i>written</i>
<i>coming</i>	<i>receive</i>	
<i>dropped</i>	<i>studied</i>	
answered	except	trouble
cities	handkerchief	umbrella
cousin	neighbor	useful
cotton	oblige	village
different	pleasant	whom
drawer	replied	woolen
either	straight	

#### IV. Written Standards.

The following paragraph was selected to represent the composition ability that it seems reasonable to expect from the child of average power at the end of his fifth year. It is not an easy thing to select from children's compositions of each grade a single paragraph that shall indicate the desired amount of growth from year to year. While the standard paragraphs used in this course of study have not been graded according to any scientific scale, each has been chosen after careful deliberation. Considering the fact that the schools have hitherto had no standards of any kind in oral or written composition, it would hardly be sensible to be over-finical in this first attempt to establish some. It is believed that they are adequate for the purpose of indicating to teachers in a concrete way the sort of original composition the general run of fifth-grade children should be capable of turning off at the end of the year.

#### AN HONOR

The night of the preparedness parade last summer I had the honor of holding the Mayor's hat while he was making a speech. When he finished talking he thanked me. On the way home that night I thought what a happy boy I was! The next morning I thought of the nice composition I could make out of it.

#### V. Comments and Cautions.

Teach children to avoid the very common habit of beginning the narration of an experience by such a formula as "Yesterday afternoon," "Last Friday," "As I was walking down Essex St." What has been suggested in a previous section about the importance of introducing into the beginning sentence some action or other observable detail which sharply strikes upon the reader's attention will be useful in helping to get rid of the "tag-ends, fore and aft," which encumber so many paragraphs.

Pupils should continue the habit of criticising and correcting



their own written work before handing it in. What they can do for themselves the teacher should not do for them.

Select two or three special points that you wish to impress, and examine the papers rapidly, with those points alone in view. Concentrate your efforts on those points for a time, then select other points and transfer the emphasis of your attention to them. The papers can be examined more easily and rapidly and, therefore, the exercises may be given more frequently when but few points are in mind.

Insist on each pupil's doing his best in every exercise, and refuse to accept careless work. Hand such work back, without correction, and require the pupil to do it again.

Do not try to "beat the standard" by encouraging or permitting your pupils to write paragraphs longer than the "standard." To write longer paragraphs is not to write better ones. It is just as bad business to try to exceed the standard as to fail to reach it.

## SIXTH GRADE

### ORAL

*(Two-thirds of the language time of the sixth grade is given to oral work.)*

#### I. Aims.

Continue to increase by daily oral composition exercises the pupils' power to talk freely upon their feet, to be clear in their utterance, and careful of their English. This carefulness in their speech should characterize all their recitations. The habit of good oral expression can never be established through the medium of the language period alone. Effort must be constant through the whole day's work.

Work constantly for the improvement of the enunciation of your pupils and the development of a speaking voice that



without forcing or the use of an unnatural register can be heard easily all over the room. Have frequent drills in articulation like those suggested in the Appendix. Strive to get clear enunciation in all recitations. It is of little use to work for ten or fifteen minutes a week on enunciation drills, and accept mumbling and half audible talk from pupils during the rest of the time. The teacher who goes in for clean-cut enunciation will get it. We fail to get a good many things from our pupils because we are not earnest enough in our effort to get them. It is not to be expected, of course, that children to whom English is an acquired language will speak as perfectly, so far as enunciation goes, as native-born children. That difficulty is always to be taken into consideration in judging the results of a teacher's work in oral language. No sixth-grade class in any community, however, is made up exclusively of children of non-English-speaking parents; so that there are always children enough in every room whose speech may be taken, in all fairness, as samples of the persistence and success of the teacher's efforts to secure distinct enunciation.

Daily exercises in oral composition are to be continued. The suggestions for improving the paragraphs, given in the third, fourth, and fifth grades, are equally applicable here, and the sixth-grade teacher should make herself familiar with them.

Paragraphs should not exceed five sentences in length.

Follow up strongly the fifth-grade effort to make clear to children by constant illustration the difference between the *objective* and the *subjective* type of "experience" and the superiority of the latter as a source of material for composition subjects. Re-read the chapter on "Teaching Pupils to Avoid the Trivial and Sensational in Personal Experience" (pp. 24-26).

## II. Examples of Oral Composition.

The following paragraphs represent something of the quality of work to be sought for in the oral compositions of this year.

They have for subjects a *single item* of some individual "experience" upon which they freely express their opinions or feelings. The longest of them has only six sentences. No sentence is wasted. There is some evidence of thought about interesting beginnings and endings. Best of all, they are natural, genuine fragments of self-expression.

### NONE FOR SALE

When I entered the school yard Zita asked me if I had an oral composition ready. I said I had not thought of any. Zita said "I have three." Because I didn't have any, I offered to buy one of hers for a penny, but she refused to sell one. She told me that people must work for themselves if they want to get along.

### NEVER AGAIN

One night as we were going to have our supper, I asked my mother for five cents. Just because she wouldn't give it to me, I went into the front room and said I didn't want any supper. I thought my mother would call me out and give me the five cents. When I went into the kitchen again, I found the table cleared off and no supper for me.

### CAN'T FOOL ME

Bessie told me that she could tell if I liked butter or not. I thought she was silly, but I let her test me. She put a buttercup under my chin. The reflection made my chin yellow, so she said I liked butter. As a matter of fact I don't like butter. So I told her she wasn't so wonderful after all.

### III. Errors of Speech.

The school has to fight perpetually the language habits of the street, and children are in school less than half of every year. But it is not fair to measure the power of the school to overcome bad language environment out of school by comparing the length of time spent in school with that spent upon the street. By reason of its opportunity to rivet attention and create vivid im-

pressions, an hour in school, if used to the fullest extent, far outweighs an hour upon the street. Everybody knows the miracles the school performs upon the little foreign children who enter it. But miracles are not wrought incidentally. Children cannot be taught to forsake bad habits by occasionally correcting their use of *ain'ts* and *wa'n'ts*. The effort must be organized, regular, and persistent. The errors, after all, are not many, and it is wonderful how the avoidance of a few of them affects our opinion of a person's education. The knowledge of a dozen forms of correct expression will give a person an appearance of being well educated, even though his schooling was very limited. The man who never says *ain't* almost qualifies as an educated man.

Excellent material for drill for upper grades may be found in "Applied English Grammar," a text-book written a dozen years ago by Edwin H. Lewis, published by the Macmillan Company, and in a more recent book, "Language Games for All Grades," by Miss Alhambra G. Deming, published by the Beckley-Cardy Company of Chicago.

The ice had broke.  
The picture is tore.  
I seen him when he done it.  
I come to school early this morning.  
There was two new boys in the yard.

He done his work first.  
You wasn't there.  
'Taint no good.  
She don't want them.

Hand me them books.

Who is going, you or me?  
It was me that lent the book.

John took my knife off me.  
She's just after coming.  
My teacher learned me to write.  
It sort of makes you afraid.  
Leave me see.  
I have a book what has no cover.

Here, look't.  
He was to church.  
It went fine.  
Where are you at?  
We won't have no school to-day.  
I hat ter go home.

Mary talked like he did.  
Can I speak to her?

The water pipe is all froze up.

What are you doin' ?  
Are they any school ?  
I'm a thinkin' a goin' to-night.  
Gimme a book.

Kin' you ketch the ball ?  
Give it to 'em.  
My mudder gave me the book.

#### IV. Comments and Cautions.

Remember that those who talk well will write well. Writers may not be speakers, but really good speakers can always write.

The teacher must insist that the pupil give her only his best English in all recitations, and that clear expression become more and more general as the year advances.

In a recent survey of classroom teaching in the city of New York, shorthand reports of eighteen recitations showed that all the pupils together used about 5000 words, while their teachers used about 19,000 words. Who does the most talking in *your* room?

Helpful criticisms by the pupils should be encouraged, but aimless, trite remarks such as "I liked what you said" and "I think you had a good choice of words" should be discouraged. Impress upon the pupils that only such criticism should be offered as will call attention to an excellence, or enable the one who is speaking to do better in his next effort. Avoid also the danger of allowing the criticism to stop with minor corrections and evident slips.

Pupils, also, should be taught by degrees to make definite, systematic, and kindly suggestions on both the matter presented by the pupil talking and his manner of presenting it, and should be led to discover what the secret is of the effectiveness of the pupils who talk well.

## WRITTEN

(One-third of the language time of the sixth grade is given to written work.)

## I. Aims.

To train children to find in the common, everyday life about them interesting topics for their paragraphs.

To lead them to distinguish between "real experience" and "near-experience," and to choose the former always for their subjects.

To encourage every evidence of originality and the expression of the pupil's opinions, feelings, and desires.

To restrain the "ready writers" from exceeding the standard length of paragraph (not more than five or six sentences at most).

To arouse the beginnings of a pride in *workmanship* — in interesting beginnings and endings that have "the personal touch."

To excuse no sentence not grammatically complete and not properly begun and ended.

To excuse no misspelling of the words in the special drill lists from the first to the sixth grade.

Sentences should still be kept simple. At the same time pupils who show themselves capable of using complex and compound sentences in their written paragraphs without getting snarled up in them should be allowed to use them. The teacher must remember, however, that the longer a child allows a sentence to run, the greater the danger is that it will run away with him. Just as soon as a pupil shows by his careless handling of the long sentence that he is enjoying more liberty than is good for him, he should be brought back to the starting line.

It would be a waste of time to attempt to train all of the pupils in this grade, or even a majority of them, to use the longer sentence. Even if it could be successfully done, it would be done at too great an expense. There are other things more important at this stage. If your class leaves the sixth grade able to write



good short sentences, invariably begun with a capital letter and ended with a period or whatever closing mark is required, you may thank your stars. Have no regrets that the course does not permit you to teach a maturer style. You will give them the thing most needful. If they remain in school, they will get later on what you perhaps would like to give them now. If they leave school early to go to work, you will have given them the best possible thing — the habit of writing short, simple, clear, and correct sentences.

The one step in advance which the sixth-grade teacher may take, with respect to sentence structure, is to train her pupils to use a greater variety of ways of beginning their sentences. They should be taught to avoid repetition of the same word or phrase. They may be also taught to practice some of the simpler principles of inversion, so as to make the important things in the sentence come first, or last. The conventional order of subject, verb, and object in the sentence tends toward monotony. If this stereotyped order can be varied occasionally, the monotony of a succession of short sentences will be relieved and the whole effect of the sentence structure improved. It is not expected that all the pupils will develop much skill in this kind of work, if it is attempted; but it is better to spend effort upon improving the simple sentence than to try to get all the children to use complex and compound sentences, which is more than can be expected of sixth-grade children.

In the sixth grade *the friendly letter* is to continue an important feature of the written work, and *the business letter* is to be introduced. The standard form for the business letter is printed in an Appendix. The body of the business letter should be confined to a few sentences. The chief thing to teach is the form. The friendly letter ought to show some growth in interest and ease, in proportion as the children gain in the power to elaborate a single theme interestingly in their own original paragraph work. All letters are to be confined to a single paragraph.



## II. Technicalities.

Quotation marks are here introduced for the first time. Do not try to teach the so-called "broken quotation." Emphasize the idea that *every word spoken* by the person that is quoted, and *not one word more nor less*, must be inclosed in quotation marks. *If every word spoken* can be inclosed by *one* set of quotation marks, then only one set is required. But if every word spoken cannot be brought inside of *one* set of quotation marks, without also taking in words *that were not spoken* by the person quoted, then two sets must be used, or as many as are necessary. Drill on quotation marks must not be overdone. The school in the past has wasted many hours upon them, with no results. Tests have proved that with all the teaching of them, eighth-grade children use them very imperfectly in their free writing. As a matter of fact, quotation marks do not enter enough into the kind of writing that the average boy and girl do after they leave school to make it pay to spend very much time in drill upon them. The same is true of the comma in a series and the comma after the name of a person addressed, two other points upon which we foolishly spent our time in former days.

(1) Capitals. Use in abbreviations listed below, and in first word of quotation.

(2) Punctuation marks necessary in letter forms.

(3) Abbreviations. Gov., Hon., Pres., Rev., and others in general use.

(4) Quotation marks in simple quotations.

(5) Review all technicalities listed under earlier grades.

## III. Words for Special Spelling Drill.

The pupils should be tested from month to month on all the words in these special lists, from the second grade up. From these tests, lists should be made of the words misspelled by any considerable number of the class, and vigorous drill given upon

these words until subsequent tests prove they have been mastered. Nothing short of perfect scores should satisfy the teacher. It has been proved that not one eighth-grade child in a thousand misspells more than one hundred words of his ordinary writing vocabulary. It is believed that if all the words contained in this course of study are thoroughly mastered, the spelling problem, so far as the pupil's normal writing vocabulary is concerned, will be satisfactorily solved.

(Review words are printed *in italics*.)

<i>already</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>studying</i>
<i>all right</i>	<i>having</i>	<i>their</i>
<i>beginning</i>	<i>heard</i>	<i>there</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>minute</i>	<i>too</i>
<i>bicycle</i>	<i>oblige</i>	<i>truly</i>
<i>business</i>	<i>pleasing</i>	<i>using</i>
<i>coming</i>	<i>quite</i>	<i>woolen</i>
<i>different</i>	<i>really</i>	<i>writing</i>
<i>enough</i>	<i>receive</i>	
<i>except</i>	<i>replied</i>	

absence	describe	separate
allowed	hurried	several
attacked	library	speech
certainly	occurred	surprised
clothing	seized	

#### IV. Written Standards.

All the studies that have so far been undertaken with a view to establishing a scale for the measurement of composition have shown that there is a startling diversity in the judgment of teachers as to the excellence of compositions submitted by pupils. The belief that this wide variation of judgment as to the intrinsic merit of the same composition is due, in no small degree, to the

lack of anything like definite standards by which the language work of pupils may be measured has led to the formulation of the written standards set up in this course of study. That there will be complete agreement as to the suitability of these selections as standards is not to be expected. But until further study and experimentation will have evolved a better set of standards it is hoped that they will help to interpret to teachers in concrete form the requirements of written language.

The composition that follows is intended to represent the language power which it is believed the average sixth-grade pupil who has been trained along the lines suggested in this course of study ought to possess.

### MY ELEVATED RAILWAY PROBLEM

I am building an elevated railway with my erector. As I expect to make it more than ten feet in length I shall be forced to make a curve. The curved track is all right, but to get the cable around the curve and not tip the car over is a different story. I think that some way or other I can manage it. But it is going to take some planning.

#### V. Comments and Cautions.

Strive to avoid making composition work disliked. In all correction try to stimulate the pupil to improve his written language because of the value to himself, and teach him to appreciate correction as an aid in securing that desired end. Do not dwell on correction, either in oral or written work, so much as to restrain the child's flow of thought. He should be stimulated to do careful work, but should be left to express his thought unchecked.

Discourage the use of "dialogue" in your pupils' paragraphs. It is a kind of writing which because of its technical punctuation is more bother than it is worth. Besides, there is not much room for "conversation" in our short paragraphs. Furthermore, the

sort of conversation that children usually put into the mouths of their characters adds little, if anything, to the interest of their compositions.

There are two lines of correction and criticism to be observed continually: *known errors*, those upon which there has been previous class drill; *unknown errors*, those which the pupil does not recognize as mistakes or weaknesses. Pupils should be held to *self-correction* of the former (those errors upon which they have been well drilled); but matters pertaining to the bettering of their sentences, their choice of words, their arrangement of ideas are matters for the teacher to discuss in class. She cannot do this if all her time is spent in correcting mechanical errors.

See that your children get the habit of going over their work carefully, before handing it in, and making any changes they think will improve it. Pupils should feel free at such times to draw a line through a word and substitute a better one, or make any other changes that they think are for the better. The wise teacher is not distressed by changes of this sort made upon the paper. By degrees, the pupils who make them will learn to *anticipate* errors, and choose in advance the better word or the better form of sentence. We are not looking for *perfect* papers; we are looking to develop the power that will later on make them *less imperfect*. This does not mean that neatness is not to be encouraged and commended, or that slovenly work is not to be condemned. It means that we must be big enough not to fret over little things, so long as the children are clearly on their way to better writing. And every child is on his way to better writing who is getting the habit of scrutinizing his composition, and correcting and improving his work before the paper is carried up to the teacher.

It is not desirable that all pupils of a class should write upon the same subject at the same time. There is no greater drudgery

than trying to write upon an unfamiliar subject or an uninteresting one. No habit of good writing can be formed without a groundwork of interest. Subjects should be *personal*. What subject that is worth writing about can be personal to forty individuals? The same subject for a whole class will, in most cases, require much oral development. Ideas must be drawn out of the class, or handed out to them ready-made by the teacher. Only the children whom the subject touches personally can contribute anything worth while to the preliminary oral discussion, and only these will write about it with any heart. The other papers will be weak imitations.

## SEVENTH GRADE

### ORAL

*(One-half of the language time in the seventh grade is given to oral work.)*

#### I. Aims.

A seventh-grade pupil at the end of the year ought to be able, when called upon, to stand on both feet, away from the desk and talk for a minute or two upon a subject familiar to him in simple, clear, and grammatical English, with clear enunciation and a natural pitch of voice.

The oral exercises should be planned and carried out as carefully as the written exercises. Discuss the things that help to make a speaker interesting, such as a correct standing position, a pleasant quality of voice, clear enunciation, and a rate of utterance not too fast to be hard to follow and slow enough to insure clean-cut articulation; eyes upon the schoolroom audience, not upon the floor or the ceiling; the manner of one interested in what he is saying and in the effect he desires to produce, instead of one performing a perfunctory or unwilling task which he wants to have done with as soon as possible.

Teachers cannot be too often reminded that *oral work is a great deal more important than written work*, although in this grade an equal amount of the language time is devoted to each. Children who leave school from the seventh grade will probably have little occasion to write anything; but they will talk every day of their lives, and their success in life will depend much more upon their ability to talk than upon their ability to write. Besides, children who are to be taught to write well must first be taught to talk well. There is scarcely a point in written composition that cannot be developed as effectively, and much more economically, in the oral exercise; viz. arrangement of ideas, correctness and variety of sentence structure, choice and variety of words. Then, too, the moral value of the training is great. When a boy's slouching, nerveless posture against his desk and his slovenly enunciation of disjointed half sentences have been exchanged for a body held erect, a voice and an enunciation that carry thought clearly stated, you have a boy who has gained in character as well as in ability to talk correctly upon his feet.

Continue to emphasize *the importance of good enunciation*, not only in the oral language period, but in all recitations. The reading period ought to contribute more to this end than it usually does. The fact that every individual in the schoolroom audience (including the teacher) holds a printed copy of what the pupil is reading aloud is not calculated to provide a very strong motive for clean-cut utterance. The listeners know what the pupil is reading, even if neither his voice nor his articulation is good. There is a growing suspicion that the oral reading period in the grammar grades is very wasteful of time as a means of teaching children to read, because the reading ability that will function most practically in the lives of children after their school days are over is not the ability to read aloud, but the ability to gather thought swiftly and accurately from the printed page — that is, the power to read silently. But so long as oral reading holds its



large place in the daily program, it ought to be made as effective a means as possible to improve children's speech by training them in the right use of the voice, and by securing the best possible enunciation of the words they read. It is certain that the work in oral language, so far as clear utterance is concerned, would be greatly helped out by a greater emphasis upon these matters in the reading lesson.

Teachers should re-read the chapter on "Teaching Pupils to Avoid the Trivial and Sensational in Personal Experience" (pp. 24-26). Study also the suggestions upon this point in the fifth-grade section. The illustrative compositions above the fourth grade all enforce this very important idea.

## II. Examples of Oral Composition.

Note that in all the paragraphs the child's "experience" is expressed in terms of *thought* rather than in terms of *action*.

### A GOOD LESSON FOR ME

When our principal came into my room the other day, my teacher handed him a paper I had written. As he read it out loud to the pupils he kept stumbling over the words. I knew he didn't stumble because he didn't know how to read. I knew well enough it was because my writing was not good. It was a good lesson for me. Now I am trying to write so people can read it.

### PLAYING HOSPITAL

It was a very hot day and our patients were very restless. But in bed they had to stay. If we let them get up they would be sick much longer. When eating time came our patients did not seem sick at all, for they ate more than I could. But when medicine time came it was quite the other way. I wonder if in real hospitals some patients are like ours?

## DOING OUR BIT

This morning a notice was read in our school about protecting war gardens. For my part I will do the best I can. I have a garden of my own and I know the work it takes to plant it and care for it. I hope every boy will do the best he can to protect every garden from injury and stealing.

## MOONLIGHT BASEBALL

Nearly all my chums work all day and cannot play ball until after supper. So we have to make the most of the time that is left. Some evenings we play until the moon comes out. If the moon were only brighter we could play as long as we wanted to. I guess it is a good thing it isn't, because there would be so many sleepy boys going to work mornings.

## III. Common Errors of Speech.

"If *to do* were as easy as *to know what 'twere good to do*," teachers would simply have to teach children the rules they violate in their everyday speech, and the errors would straightway disappear. Unfortunately, correct speech is not acquired by a knowledge of rules. The rules of grammar do not fashion speech. They do not establish habits of correct usage; they only make that usage more intelligent. Therefore imitation, practice, and habit — not rules, formulas, and definitions — should be the watchwords of the teacher. It is constant use and practice under never-failing watch and correction that make pupils talk well.

Two windows was broke.

Who done it?

We was to study history this period.

It don't matter.

He come to school with me.

They et the cakes.

The dog seen a squirrel.

I ain't doin' nothin'.

Who you going for?  
Where's them two tickets?

Me and my brother wrote it.

We were to the show.  
That book learns you how to take care  
of animals.

My pen don't write good.  
He had kind of a hard time.  
Draw it like I said.

Shall I bring this book home?  
I wouldn't be left do it.  
Is every one in their place?  
Those kind of flowers ain't pretty.  
I didn't go no place.

I'm all better now.

He wouldn't of gone.  
Are they any pencils?  
I'm doin' my work.

She uster live on Elm St.  
Can't you see 'em?  
Doncher see?

#### IV. Comments and Cautions.

The teacher must be convinced that it is supremely worth while to equip a child with the power to express what he thinks in direct and clean-cut sentences, however simple, and that clear expression reacts on clear thinking.

Children talk the talk of the majority on the playground, on the streets, in their homes. The majority are careless of rules and ignorant of standards. With a fourth-grade vocabulary and fourth-grade habits of expression, a seventh- or eighth-grade child can make known most of his wants and most of his thoughts to his playmates and his family. The conversation that he hears passes on to him the worn coins of provincialism and bad English. For a few hours a day, five days out of seven, he is shut up in a different world, where the teacher, perhaps, as one pupil said, "always requests us to use good English." But what of it? Too often the only use for any English at all is for a few words in answer to rapid-fire questions, and nobody but the teacher has a chance to express herself. It is no wonder that children consider their habits of speech of little importance even in school, when

the most continuous expression required of them is the answering of questions. If a teacher wishes to train children in right habits of expression, she must create opportunities for such expression; she must learn to keep still and let the pupils talk. When the pupil does talk, the teacher should insist that he speak to the point and only to the point, answer the question and nothing but the question, and in the best words at his command.

### WRITTEN

*(One-half of the language time of the seventh grade is given to written work.)*

#### I. Aims.

In the sixth grade some attention was given to one or two of the more elementary principles of sentence structure, still keeping within the limits of the simple sentence. Variety in sentence beginning was suggested, and the variety that results from changing occasionally the monotonous sequence of subject, verb, and object. In the seventh grade, if the teacher finds her class up to grade in the fundamentals of their written work, she should be encouraged to go a little farther into the study of *sentence betterment*. She should also devote a little attention to the study of *choice of words*. These matters have been postponed until the seventh year, because the pupil does not earlier perceive the value of such things. Up to this time, we have aimed at copious and natural expression. Now we have arrived at the place where the pupil himself, if he has been led to become a willing producer of compositions expressing his own experiences and views of life, feels the need of learning how to say things better. This is the time, therefore, when children are not only willing, but eager, to study how they may contrive to say more effectively what they want to say. It is not to be expected, nor desired, that children in the grammar grades be taught many of the refinements of style. The business of the grammar school is

to teach them to write correctly and clearly, and no teacher is to neglect the latter in her efforts to secure the effects that come from increased skill in handling sentences, or in the choice of words. It is better to know nothing of style than to sacrifice clearness and correctness in the process of getting it. The work here suggested should not be begun as class exercises until *the second half of the year*. By that time the teacher will know whether the children are ready for it; and, in addition, the pupils will by that time have gained from their grammar work enough familiarity with the grammatical structure of the sentence to enable them to begin the work of expanding, and otherwise improving, their sentences more understandingly. These matters should deal only with the simplest and most useful points of style.

The following ways of bettering the sentence are not thought to be beyond the capacity of seventh-grade pupils :

1. Expanding the short simple sentence by amplifying the subject and predicate by (1) a word, (2) a phrase, (3) a clause.
2. Combining sets of short sentences that have unity of thought into a single sentence.
3. Contracting long sentences, by reducing a clause to a phrase, a phrase to a word.
4. Seeking *variety* in sentence beginnings, and through mixing long and short sentences in the paragraph.

The teacher should be on her guard not to overdo this conscious manipulation of sentences, so as to produce an artificial style. It is the common experience of teachers of composition that if this work of expanding sentences is gone into mechanically and in wholesale fashion, its results are likely to be disappointing. In the effort of the pupils to put into a single sentence what before they were accustomed to express in two or three sentences, there is likely to appear a new awkwardness that is very disconcerting to the teacher. Only the teacher's good language sense will carry her successfully through these first ventures toward conscious style.



The work of awakening in pupils *a sense of word values* is attended by no such danger, and becomes for children a most pleasurable study, if the teacher herself has a genuine feeling for words and is sensitive to their power of suggestion. It is not expected that grammar school children will become expert in the use of exact, appropriate, and expressive words. All that teachers should hope to do, or try to do, is to awaken in their pupils *the beginnings* of an appreciation of words, so that some of them, at least, will not be satisfied with the meager stock of worn-out words with which many people are content to express themselves both in speech and writing. Dickens tells us of a young man in Doctor Blimber's school who was so badly taught that when he began to have whiskers he left off having brains. Most people stop learning words as soon as they have accumulated a vocabulary sufficient to communicate their commonest wants, and go through life on a fourth-grade vocabulary. The school, therefore, ought to do a little more than it has done to start the current of children's thought in the direction of a better choice of words in their speech and their writing. It is work that will not take much time. Occasional talks upon the value of expressive words, illustrated and reënforced by the reading of selections from writers who are acknowledged masters of the art of diction, will do much to arouse a desire in the pupils to use a livelier verb here or a more expressive adjective there in their written paragraphs. Nothing is more valuable than the use of the "model," unless it is the teacher's own sensitiveness to words aptly used and phrases happily turned. If the teacher who reads to her class a paragraph illustrating the use of "words fitly chosen" does not make manifest her own keen appreciation and delight, the art of the "model" will not be likely to impress her pupils.

There are many text-books that deal admirably with the subjects of sentence betterment and the choice of words. A few are mentioned here. Most of them are high school text-books, and their treatment of the matters is too advanced for grammar



school pupils. They are put here for the use of teachers, who will find in them many suggestions which they can use to advantage with their own classes.

### BETTERMENT OF THE SENTENCE

Stebbins' "Sentence Improvement," all exercises for "Transforming Sentences."

Hitchcock's "Practice Book in English Composition," pp. 119-136.

Scott and Denny, "Elementary English Composition," pp. 80-100.

Huntington's "Elementary English Composition," pp. 100-152.

"Practice Work in English" (Knight), pp. 118-146.

Bailey and Manley, Book II, pp. 124-130.

Aldine Second Language Book, pp. 179, 180, 181, 195, 205.

Gerrish and Cunningham, "Practical English Composition," pp. 169-215.

Canby and Opdycke, "Elements of Composition," pp. 40-93.

"Lessons in English," Scott-Southworth, Book II, pp. 120-129, 137-147, 192-206, etc.

### CHOICE OF WORDS

"First Book of Composition" (Briggs and McKinney), pp. 55-75; 183-193; 197-213.

Brooks's "English Composition," I, pp. 132-145.

Gerrish and Cunningham's "Practical English Composition," pp. 216-224.

Canby and Opdycke's "Elements of Composition," pp. 160-187.

Macdonald's "Foundation English," pp. 38-70.

Huntington's "Elementary English Composition," pp. 152-166.

"Lessons in English," Scott-Southworth, Book I, pp. 66, 171, etc.; Book II, pp. 261-277.

## II. Technicalities.

Review the technicalities taught in the earlier grades, whenever the written work of your class indicates the need of review. Do not waste time in reviewing, just for the sake of reviewing.

Take care that no time is spent on technicalities which are not required, and which have been purposely omitted from this course.

In the second half of the year, it may become necessary to give some attention to the use of the comma within the sentence. The restriction of the written sentence to the simple form in grades below the seventh has made unnecessary any reference to this use of the comma before. Presumably the work of expanding the sentence, which is to be taken up in the second half of the seventh year (see "Written Aims") will result in the more general use of the longer sentence, which may be of such form as to require the use of commas to separate the members. Many pupils will use the comma naturally in this way. Indeed, most children punctuate their sentences without being told how to do it. They absorb the idea unconsciously from the punctuation of the matter they read in and out of school. There may be no need of your teaching this use of the comma at all. And unless the failure to use it is general, it would be best not to bother about it. If it is taught at all, it should be taught only in its very simplest uses. Children cannot make fine distinctions. The teacher who harps on the use of commas will find a great many of them in her pupils' papers, but a large proportion of them will be in the wrong place.

Spend no time on the comma in a series or on the comma in direct address. Spend very little time upon quotation marks, and make no reference to "broken" or "divided" quotations. See that the punctuation of the letter form is thoroughly known.

### III. Words for Special Spelling Drill.

(Review words are printed *in italics*.)

*absence*  
*all ready*  
*all right*

*describe*  
*friend*  
*laughed*

*their*  
*there*  
*too*

<i>already</i>	<i>library</i>	<i>truly</i>
<i>attacked</i>	<i>loose</i>	<i>weather</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>minute</i>	<i>wholly</i>
<i>certainly</i>	<i>perhaps</i>	<i>written</i>
<i>changing</i>	<i>really</i>	
<i>choose</i>	<i>surprised</i>	
<i>anxious</i>	<i>disappeared</i>	<i>necessary</i>
<i>chief</i>	<i>finally</i>	<i>precede</i>
<i>copied</i>	<i>foreign</i>	<i>principal</i>
<i>cordially</i>	<i>government</i>	<i>probably</i>
<i>despair</i>	<i>grammar</i>	<i>respectfully</i>
<i>disagreeable</i>	<i>judgment</i>	<i>sincerely</i>

#### IV. Written Standards.

The selections printed in this course as examples of oral and written composition (except some which are specially indicated) are free from errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. This does not make them any less useful as standards than if the childish errors had been retained. It is not expected that children are going to write papers that are mechanically perfect from beginning to end. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the relatively simple requirements for written work laid down in this course of study make for conditions much more favorable for correct work upon the part of the pupils than was the case when the requirements were less definite and the amount of writing larger. The restriction of the sentences below the seventh grade to the simple form, except in the case of pupils who have more than ordinary language power, will keep out of the compositions most of the loose and disjointed construction that characterizes children's unrestricted writing. The errors, therefore, will be chiefly those of spelling and grammar. Children can always be counted upon to furnish their quota of such errors. They would not be children, if they did not. Still, the ideal of both teacher and pupil should be a paragraph free from errors of this very

sort, and for that reason the printed standards have been made free from them.

### HELPING MY COUNTRY

Every summer since I can remember we have had flowers growing in our yard. This year on account of the necessity for food for the soldiers we have very few flowers, but instead a great many vegetables. Our lettuce is nearly ready for eating. The tomatoes are a foot high and are beginning to look very rugged. No one in my family has a guilty conscience for not doing something for his country.

#### V. Comments and Cautions.

The idea that criticism must be helpful, sympathetic, and constructive needs to be kept in mind. Webster defines criticism as "the art of judging with knowledge and propriety of the beauties and faults of a literary performance." Too often in school composition only the latter half of the definition, "judging of the faults," is considered criticism, with the result that the child becomes discouraged and indifferent to his writing. Especially is this true when the corrections are numerous. Some mistakes (except of form) should pass unnoticed with many pupils. What is the good of having papers corrected and re-corrected until all errors disappear and little remains of the original except the handwriting? Such papers are not evidence of the children's ability to express themselves in good English, but rather of the teacher's ability to substitute her knowledge for the pupil's, perhaps without realizing that she is doing so. On the other hand, the teacher who can stimulate her pupils to greater efforts by her judicious appreciation of what they have already done will succeed in making them enthusiastic users of English. A sense of humor is what we need, not sarcasm.

Letter writing should be an important part of written composition in every year above the third. The *letter form* should be strictly in accordance with the standards printed in the Appendix

of the Course. The body of the letter should be always a *single paragraph*, of a length corresponding to that of the written standard for the grade. This requires that the letters be written on *some single topic* that makes suitable material for a letter. They should not be composed of rambling "miscellanies." The letters printed on page 93 of the Course suggest some natural uses of letters that may be enlarged and adapted to suit the needs of older pupils. Letter writing offers an unrivaled field for the expression of the child's personality.

## EIGHTH GRADE

### ORAL

*(One-half of the language time in the eighth grade is given to oral work.)*

#### I. Aims.

The aim in oral work for the eighth grade is, as was set forth in the foreword, to turn out pupils at the end of the year *able to stand before the class and talk for a minute or two upon a subject within the range of their knowledge or experience, speaking plainly, in clean-cut sentences, and without common grammatical mistakes*. The points emphasized in the seventh year (erect standing, clear enunciation, etc.), should be reëmphasized in the eighth grade.

Debates in which many pupils will participate very briefly furnish excellent opportunity for training in talking clearly and to the point. The management by the pupils of the regular morning exercises, of special day exercises, and occasionally of the recitation, gives opportunity for the exercise of initiative and responsibility, and cultivates self-possession and self-poise. A teacher's success in accomplishing results in oral composition lies in her ability to arouse the interest of her pupils, in furnishing real motives and the most natural conditions for the work, in her



skill in directing the choice of topics, and in her power to make the criticism encouraging, helpful, and constructive.

## II. Examples of Oral Composition.

### IT PAYS TO BE READY

It was the oral language period, and at last my name was called. I had no composition ready. We had several visitors and their eyes were fixed upon me. What opinion would the visitors form about me? What would they say about our language work? I was terribly frightened and terribly sorry. Somehow all of a sudden I picked up my courage and gave a short composition. When I sat down and saw the visitors looked pleased, I was a happy girl. But never again shall I come to school without having thought of something to talk about in the oral language period.

### DEMONSTRATING

Father put in his application to have a garage built in the yard for the store truck. That afternoon a man that we knew came with a new seven-seater Packard and took us for a ride. As we spun along the boulevard, he explained how to operate it. Suddenly he said, "Mr. Hill, this would be a good car for your family." Father had not guessed his motive until then. Although we have no intentions of buying one I wish a few more demonstrators would come around.

### RED FOR DANGER

Red means danger, but I paid no heed to the warning. I love to wear big stiff bows on my hair, and my fingers were just itching to get hold of a nice big red hair ribbon that belonged to my sister. One day when she had gone out I took the ribbon from its box and wore it. I was very proud of my beautiful big red bow. I wore it two or three days, but managed to take it off and hide it under my coat before I entered the house. One night having something on my mind, I forgot to remove the ribbon and went singing into the house. My song soon stopped however for my sister spied her ribbon. To tell what followed would bring back too painful memories to me.



## WAITING UNTIL YOU'RE TOLD

Sometimes it is a good thing to wait for orders. It was so the other day when I wanted to telephone to Haverhill. It costs ten cents to telephone to Haverhill — and that's the price of two shows. I found that out before I went into the pay station. So when I found a slot that had the words "ten cents" over it, I dropped my treasure into it. I took off the receiver, and told the operator the number I wanted. In a few seconds I heard Central say "Ten cents, please." I tried to explain that I had already dropped in my money, but it was like talking to a dead man. Needless to say I walked out a sadder and wiser boy.

## FLUFFY'S SHOWER BATH

One warm night Fluffy, our pet kitten, slipped out of the house and when we tried to catch her, she ran under the piazza. I tried hard to get her to come, but coaxing did no good. Finally I thought of a new scheme. Taking the hose I turned it on full force under the piazza. Out came Fluffy like a shot and dashed into the house. She didn't look very fluffy for a while. The next time she fails to come when I call her, I shall have to give her another shower bath.

## "THE LOST PRINCE"

Last year in the seventh grade our teacher read us many interesting books. Among these was Burnett's "The Lost Prince." Although it was not a girl's book, I can truthfully say that most of the girls enjoyed it immensely. It has a strong plot, and it holds the attention to the end. Our teacher usually reads to us for about five minutes in the afternoon just before dismissal, but if we scored one hundred per cent in spelling we had the pleasure of hearing her read for half an hour. Each day I went home full of praises of the wonderful book. At Christmas I was fortunate enough to receive a fine copy of the book I like so well.

## A WRONG IMPRESSION

I couldn't understand my aunt's enthusiasm because she had a box seat at the theatre. I thought a box would be a very uncom-

fortable seat and I was sure I didn't want to sit on one. One day I went to a show with her, and I wanted to know where they kept the box seats. When I saw what they really were, I was very much surprised. I'm sure I would be enthusiastic too, if I could sit in one.

### WHEN A JOKE MORE THAN FAILED

Card day never did appeal to me. At each step I stop to look at my card to see if by any chance my fairy godmother has changed the mark. But it always remains the same and that's pretty poor. When I reached home one card day I found my mother waiting for me. Thinking that a little joking would take her mind off the card I said, "With my regards." She looked first at the card and then over her spectacles at me. The affair that followed (in which my father's shaving strap figured) is not pleasant to think of. The worst of it was that when she finished my mother said calmly, "With my regards."

### III. Common Errors of Speech.

(NOTE. — The teacher should read the chapter on "Common Errors of Speech" which is printed in an Appendix, and the comments made under this section in all the grades from the first to the seventh.)

There is enough pencils.

I done my examples.

You was right.

Neither of the girls have it.

It don't seem right.

Who did this come from?

He'll meet you and I.

I left my book to home.

She is all better to-day.

I have quite a few pears.

I like these kind of examples.

We all seen the ball game.

Two of the wheels come off.

I ain't got none.

I like them colors.

I heard of you leaving.

I've learned it to her.

I don't know if I shall go.

Do it like they do.

Where are you at?

They wouldn't leave him play.  
They done it pretty good.  
Can I take my history home?  
That's different than I expected.

Each may take their pencils.  
The lesson ain't in the book.

I must of been late.  
I reco'nized the story.

He makes 'em think!

#### IV. Comments and Cautions.

Should the pupils' answers to all questions be made in complete statements? That depends. While a subject is being developed by the teacher in logical order by questions, a full statement might hinder the quick grasp of a point on the part of the pupil, and might break the train of the teacher's questioning. At such times, full statements are not necessary and need not be insisted upon. The same is true in conversational exercises involving questions. Insistence upon complete statements at such times would be establishing a condition that is unnatural, unusual in life, and peculiar to the schoolroom. *In the recitation*, however, the answers should be given, almost always, in complete statements.

It will not do to pass by mistakes on the ground that the pupil cannot think and speak correctly at the same time. That is precisely what he must learn to do, and he must carefully practice it in every study.

Every recitation should strengthen the habit of connected thinking and correct speech, cast into complete sentences.

#### WRITTEN

*(One-half of the language time in the eighth grade is given to written work.)*

#### I. Aims.

This course of study has been built upon the conviction that the written language work in the grammar school should be con-

finer to a few fundamental things, and that there should be constant opportunity for practice in these few fundamental things. In the preface the following standard was set up as the goal of grammar school teaching. It is believed that the ability the standard calls for is the kind that will function most usefully in the life of the average grammar school graduate, and that the degree of ability it represents is one reasonably possible to be acquired by children of ordinary capacity during eight years of school. The standard was thus defined:

“The ability to write with fair facility an original paragraph upon a subject within the range of the pupil’s experience or interests.”

Such a paragraph should show:

1. An absolute mastery of “the sentence idea.”
2. Freedom from glaring grammatical mistakes.
3. Correct spelling of all ordinary words.
4. Unfailing use of the commonest marks in punctuation.

In developing this power to write, each grade has its share of the work to do. Each grade has its own standard of accomplishment set down for it in black and white. With the work each grade is called upon to do and with the standard of writing ability each grade is expected to reach, the eighth-grade teacher should make herself thoroughly familiar. Before starting upon the new work assigned to her grade, she should ascertain what the new class knows about written composition when it comes to her and what language habits it possesses. Upon the basis of the knowledge thus discovered, she should then plan her work for the year with a view to round out and complete the training which the course of study as a whole contemplates. If deficiencies of a general character are revealed by these early tests of their writing ability, the teacher must face the task of removing them so far as she can. There is no other year left in which to do it.

It is important, of course, that the ability of the new class should be tested on the basis of seventh-grade standards, not of eighth-grade standards. One of the reasons why teachers so often find fault at first with the pupils who come up to them from a lower grade is because their judgment of the newcomers in September is unconsciously colored by their memory of what the previous class was able to do in June. But if any large portion of the class is found deficient in the fundamentals of writing, these matters must be brought up to the standard before any of the advance work suggested for the grade is attempted. It is of no use to try to teach the rudiments of style to children who cannot write correct sentences.

The advance work for the grade, when the class is ready for it, should be a continuation of the work in *sentence betterment* and in the *choice of words* which was begun in the seventh grade. The sentence work should include transforming, combining, condensing, and otherwise varying them, with the purpose of making children see how they can say what they have to say more pleasantly and more effectively. This work should not be overdone, however. The most that is sought through the work in sentence structure is to remove from the written paragraphs the monotony of the "primer sentence," which has been purposely cultivated in the grades below the seventh. A good many children naturally use the longer sentence, and to such children its use has not been denied in the lower grades. The short sentence has been exclusively required only from those who show themselves unable to use any other kind without getting into trouble. If, therefore, the eighth-grade teacher finds most of the class using in their compositions a reasonable variety of sentence structure, she will be wise not to spend very much time on the sentence work. It is a matter that has to be left largely to the teacher's judgment.

The books mentioned under this topic in the seventh grade treat fully the subject of *sentence improvement*, and to these the



eighth-grade teacher is referred. Most of these books are not adapted for use with grammar school pupils; but the teacher will find much material in them which she can adapt to the needs and ability of her class. The prose literature that the children read offers an excellent field for the study of sentence structure. Lead them constantly to observe how good writers manage their sentences. Similarly, passages selected from authors not read by the children may be reduced to short sentences by the teacher and given to the children to combine into longer ones. Afterwards let them compare their efforts with the passage as the author wrote it. Exercises in combining sentences which are made up by the teacher or taken at random from a text-book generally leave the pupils uncertain of the success of their attempts, because of the lack of any positive authority as to what the best form of the combinations should be. The opportunity afforded to compare the pupils' efforts with the author's original adds greatly to the interest of the exercise, and the frequent act of comparing their work with that of writers of repute impresses upon them, more deeply than any amount of talking can do, the difference between their crude work and the finished workmanship of the master writer. If pupils can be brought to appreciate understandingly the art of good writers and be led by reason of it to try to improve their own workmanship, the chief object of this work will have been gained. Always, however, the teacher must guard against the mistake of making children so conscious of their style that it will spoil their freedom of expression. There is danger, too, that too much work in combining and transforming sentences as a separate exercise will lead to an artificial style, or what is worse, a "wordy" style. Sentences are not improved by putting more words into them than are necessary, but children's well-intentioned efforts to round out their sentences often result in making them merely "wordy." A clause is no stronger than a phrase, nor a phrase than a word, unless something is distinctly gained by the employment of the longer expression.



The monotonous "which" clause — one of the first products of exercises in combining short sentences — is likely to prove a nuisance unless the teacher knows how to head it off.

This work in sentence improvement should go hand in hand with the writing of original paragraphs, and should not sidetrack the latter for any considerable period during the year. The only way the teacher can be sure that the special exercises in sentence structure are doing her pupils any good is the evidence of better sentences in the original paragraphs they write from day to day.

In the seventh grade a beginning was made to teach children to be more attentive to the *words* they use in their written paragraphs. This point should be made still more of in the eighth grade. The teacher should do all she can to teach them the value of *expressive words*. This work should not occupy any particular period during the year, but should run through all the teaching from the first. The books mentioned under this section in the seventh grade will give teachers excellent material and suggestions, although the treatment of the subject in most of these books is of a character more suitable to high school pupils. The literature read in class furnishes a constant supply of material, if the teacher will make good use of it. In addition, she should from time to time read to the children paragraphs illustrating the use of apt and expressive words. The books referred to contain many such paragraphs. An excellent exercise may be provided in this fashion: The teacher chooses a paragraph particularly strong in respect to the choice of words. This she "re-writes," substituting "weak" words for the author's effective ones. The paragraph in this shape is then written upon the board, or a copy of it given to each pupil. The pupils are then instructed to substitute for the "weak" words (which the teacher has indicated in her copy by underscoring) words which the children think are better ones. After they have done their best, they are then shown the author's original. The value of this exercise lies

in the opportunity it gives the pupils to compare their best efforts with the work of the trained writer.

It is not expected that eighth-grade children will become expert in the use of words in a single year. The chief thing to be sought through this kind of teaching is to train children *to give attention* to the words they read and the words they write, so that all of them will not be content all the time to put down the first word that comes into their minds.

Care should be taken that children are not led to believe that we want them to use "flowery" language. This is no longer a merit in any writing, and is particularly bad form in children's writing. Naturalness, simplicity, and sincerity are the qualities of style to be encouraged, and the moment children begin to be "flowery" these qualities disappear from their writing. They have at their command only a few worn-out phrases, like "the murmuring brook," "the moon's silvery light," "the white blanket of the snow," and similar stale and sentimental common-places. Besides, they lack that sure sense of appropriateness which saves the trained writer from offending against good taste by overadornment of language. The two paragraphs which follow illustrate the effect of the conventional phrase and worn-out diction, just referred to, in contrast with that which comes from the use of fresh, natural, and vivid words. Each describes a day in spring.

"Canoeing is an ideal sport for lovers of nature. A spring day is a day which the canoeist longs for. It enables him to drink in nature with all its splendors. The leaves of the trees are just beginning to sprout and convey an expression of joy to humanity. The birds are chirping cheerfully and welcome you with a beckon of the head, as you glide softly over the smooth waters. The stream flows on with the utmost vigor, and the sound of its ripple mingles with the songs of the birds. Everything is in harmony with nature. Even your canoe appears to be enjoying the scene, for it seems to require less strength than ever to propel it. But at last

you draw a deep sigh of regret when the veil of darkness falls and puts an end to your enjoyment."

"There is one day when all things are tired, and the very smells, as they drift on the heavy air, are old and used. One cannot explain this, but it feels so. Then there is another day — to the eye nothing whatever has changed — when all the smells are new and delightful, and the whiskers of the jungle people quiver to their roots, and the winter hair comes away from their sides in long, draggled locks. Then, perhaps, a little rain falls, and the trees and the bushes and the bamboos and the mosses and the juicy-leaved plants wake with a noise of growing that you can almost hear, and under this noise runs, day and night, a deep hum. That is the noise of the Spring — a vibrating boom which is neither bees, nor falling water, nor the wind in the tree tops, but the purring of the warm, happy world."

It is not to be expected that children can be taught to write of a spring day as Kipling can; but at least they can be prevented from writing in the fashion of the first paragraph.

## II. Words for Special Spelling Drill.

(Review words are printed *in italics*.)

<i>almost</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>receive</i>
<i>anxious</i>	<i>government</i>	<i>respectfully</i>
<i>beginning</i>	<i>grammar</i>	<i>separate</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>heard</i>	<i>sincerely</i>
<i>business</i>	<i>judgment</i>	<i>their</i>
<i>changing</i>	<i>knew</i>	<i>there</i>
<i>chief</i>	<i>laughed</i>	<i>too</i>
<i>coming</i>	<i>minute</i>	<i>tried</i>
<i>different</i>	<i>necessary</i>	<i>truly</i>
<i>disappeared</i>	<i>oblige</i>	<i>using</i>
<i>disappoint</i>	<i>principal</i>	<i>written</i>
<i>foreign</i>	<i>really</i>	

accept	excitement	ninth
college	finally	occasion
disease	immediately	preferred
eighth	knowledge	proceed

### III. Written Standards.

The paragraphs that follow, like the illustrations printed in the oral section for this grade, are typical of the kind of paragraph-compositions that most children who have had eight years of continuous training according to the method of teaching composition this book prescribes ought to be able to write. All the paragraphs are short. The longest of them contains eight sentences; the average is under six. Notwithstanding, each paragraph carries with it a sense of completeness. Each one, too, has the quality of being genuinely personal and genuinely childlike. The subjects are all drawn from experience, and from the *right kind* of "experience" — the kind that lies *within* the pupil rather than *outside* of him. There are evidences of trained workmanship; the beginning sentences catch our attention and the closing ones supply the necessary finishing touch.

There are probably some pupils in every eighth-grade class who couldn't write a paragraph like these to save their lives. There are so many grown-up people in the world who are incapable of being interesting that a few of them must have been born so. But the majority of children who have been brought up on this plan of composition work under good teachers will find themselves at the end of their grammar school course able to turn off paragraphs having something of the quality of those printed here, and find considerable pleasure in the exercise.

### WORTH MORE THAN MARKS

When my history notebook was handed back to me I wondered what my mark would be. With shaky hands I opened the cover. On a sheet of paper inside were the words, "Very good" and under-

neath the teacher had written, "A notebook that it is a pleasure to correct." I tell you those few words were worth more to me than all the "very goods" I ever got. I think every girl would rather have her teacher write a little word of praise on her paper than to put down on it the highest mark there is.

### REWARDED HOPES

For weeks I had been hoping my birthday present would be a telegraph outfit. At last my birthday arrived and was going by very swiftly without even a sign of a present. When the clock struck three I was ready to cry. When I was about giving up all hopes of receiving even a miserly present my father came in and handed me a box. Sure enough it was a telegraph outfit. They say a patient waiter is no loser. I wasn't very patient but I waited a long time for my reward.

### NOBODY'S CAT

Nobody owned the jet-black cat that came to live in my back garden, but I could not take her into the house because my yellow cat would have eaten her. After awhile I noticed that she drove off other cats that wanted to come into our garden, a thing that our cat was too lazy to do. So in spite of objections I took her in and adopted her. Nobody's cat was useful to somebody, while somebody's cat was useful to nobody.

### MY LIGHT-HEARTED SISTER

Every night when my sister comes home from work she begins singing. If she only sang sweetly I wouldn't mind, but she sings so loud that she gives us all a headache. When my mother asks her to help in the housework she says she is not feeling well. But she can't be very sick when she sings all the time. But I suppose we ought to be glad she can sing after her long day's work in the mill. A singing sister is better than a scolding sister.

### ALL FOR THE BEST

As a girl in my room was giving a language story this morning I thought I noticed she had a gold tooth. I looked closer and saw

that I was mistaken. Perhaps it is just as well she hasn't one. If she had, I know I would always be looking at it instead of listening to her composition. Then if our teacher called on me to criticise her story I wouldn't know what to say, because all my attention would have been given to Mildred's shining tooth.

### DOING TWO GOOD THINGS AT ONCE

Etta was ill, so mother assigned me to do the kitchen floor. It is a task that I hate like fury to do, but I didn't say a word of complaint. It wouldn't have done any good if I had. I stopped every now and then to practice receiving my diploma. All the girls are nervous about that, for fear they won't do it right. So with scrubbing and practicing the hour passed quickly. "It is not as bad as I had thought it would be," I said when I had finished. For had I not learned to take the diploma correctly, as well as to help mother out of a tight place?

### A GOOD LITTLE MOTHER

There is a little Italian girl on my street who is a very good little mother. Every day when she comes home from school she has to take care of her sister's baby. When it cries Angelina takes it in her arms and walks up and down the sidewalk until it falls asleep. Then she puts the baby into its carriage. Angelina's sister pays her five cents a week, which is hardly any pay at all. I think she does it because she loves the little baby. Anyway the baby gets better care from her than she would from the mother.





## APPENDIX I

### Sounds Presenting Difficulty, and Some Exercises Designed to Improve Enunciation and Pronunciation

#### (a) *Sounds Presenting Difficulty*

1. The final *g* omitted in *ing*: *comin'* instead of *coming*.
2. Dropping final *t* or *d*: *tol'* instead of *told*; *an'* instead of *and*.
3. Introducing a letter or syllable wrongly, e.g. *umberella* instead of *umbrella*.

4. The two sounds of *th*, the aspirate and the voiced sound, as in *pith* and *then*, are confused. Thus *with* is made to rhyme with *pith*. *Th* becomes *t* as in *t'row* for *throw*.

5. The letter *r* is often added when none ought to be heard, as "I saw-r a ship."

6. Careful attention should be given to the proper pronunciation of the vowel *u* as in *Tuesday*, *duty*.

7. *th* is often pronounced as *d* or *t* — as found in *dem* for *them* or *t'ree* for *three*.

#### (b) *Some Difficulties Met by Foreign Children*

The foreign-born child has special difficulties in pronunciation. The following are the most common:

1. Mispronunciation of *ng*, final and medial. Final *ng* (as in "sing" or any present participle) is frequently pronounced as *nk*. Medial *ng* is frequently mispronounced; e.g. "singing" is pronounced "sing-ing." "Finger" is sometimes mispronounced as "fing-er," "single" as "sing-le," "linger" as "ling-er," "hanger" as "hang-ger," "anger" as "ang-er," "bringer" as "bring-ger," etc., and "len'th" and "stren'th" are heard for "length" and "strength."

2. *s* and *sh* are apt to be improperly vocalized, becoming *z* and *zh*; as "acid" becomes "azid," "creases" becomes "creazes," "assure"

becomes "azhure," etc. On the other hand, many say "wass" for "was," "whereass" for "whereas," etc.

3. The most common mispronunciation of vowels is the confounding of the sounds of *oi* and *er*; by which "oil" becomes "earl," "join" becomes "jern," "oyster" becomes "erster," etc.

### (c) *Words Commonly Mispronounced*

The following words illustrate some of the sounds that are troublesome, or which people are too lazy to bring out clearly. The teacher can add many words to the list.

arctic	elm	new
again	every	often
athlete	fellow	overalls
attacked	general	perhaps
asked	geography	pillow
been	govern	poem
business	government	poetry
catch	grocery	potato
cemetery	height	recognize
children	history	strength
chimney	hollow	studied
deaf	hundred	sword
delivery	jaw	though
depths	jewelry	thought
different	kept	through
discovery	law	to-morrow
drawing	length	usually
drowned	library	yellow
eleven	machinery	

### (d) *Suggested Drills*

Drill on words and phrases like the following can be made very helpful :

1. Sleep, sleek, sleet, sleeve.
2. Twelfth, breadth, length, depth, strength, width.
3. Weight, height.
4. Particularly, especially, certainly.
5. Just; worst, crust, finest, youngest, greatest, breakfast.
6. Kindness, goodness, helpless, thoughtless, careless.
7. Give me, let me, was he, I don't know, don't you, at all.
8. Whittle, whistle, wheel, white, when, whether, which.
9. Would you, could you, did you, can you, had you.
10. This one, that one, which one, let her go, let him do it.

(e) *In General*

1. Give drill lessons to correct faults of enunciation, until the pupils form the habit of avoiding the faults in ordinary speech.
2. Show the proper position and use of the necessary organs of speech involved in the production of the correct sound.
3. Pronounce slowly, enunciate clearly and distinctly. With foreign children sound is of greater importance than the form in the beginning.
4. Give special attention to ear-training.
5. Train the pupils to listen carefully to the teacher, to *watch* her speak, and to *imitate* her.
6. Insist all the time upon careful enunciation, exact enunciation — no “winders,” no “wan'ter,” or “saw 'im,” no “yeh's” or “yep's” for “yes.”

## APPENDIX II

### Selected Language Games, with an Analysis of the Common Errors in the Speech of Children

#### *An Analysis of the Common Errors in Children's Speech*

An inventory of the prevailing errors in the speech of children is a necessary preliminary to any rational attempt to improve the speech of children. Such an investigation was recently made in a school system comprising 3500 pupils. The teachers were

requested to note the language errors of their pupils, and to classify them as verb-errors, double negatives, mispronunciations that could be consistently classed as language errors, misuse of pronouns, adverbial errors, and colloquialisms.

The total number of mistakes observed, classified, and expressed in per cents are given here :

	FIRST GRADE	EIGHTH GRADE	ALL GRADES
1. Verb-errors . . . . .	48.3	38.6	40.1
2. Double Negatives . . . . .	3.6	2.9	3.4
3. Mispronunciation . . . . .	16.8	19.	20.4
4. Misuse of Pronouns . . . . .	18.8	18.3	17.2
5. Adverbial Errors . . . . .	5.3	6.9	5.8
6. Colloquialisms . . . . .	7.2	14.3	12.9

It will be seen from the above that :

(1) The range of errors is small. The poor English heard is due to frequent repetition of a few errors.

(2) The percentage of each class of error is relatively constant for all grades.

(3) This is evidence that persistent and organized effort was not made to eliminate the errors. The task, before it was analyzed, seemed so complex and hopeless, that teachers' efforts were scattered and futile.

(4) The verb-errors form a very large percentage of the total errors in each grade.

(5) Of the verb forms, almost one-half (see analysis below) are due to confusing the past tense and perfect participle. A dozen verbs form the bulk of the errors.

A further analysis of the verb-errors brought out the following facts :

(a) Confusing past tense and perfect participles occasioned nearly 50 % of the verb-errors.

(b) Mistakes in past tense and perfect participle of "see," "come," "do," and "go" represented *one-tenth of all the errors scored*.

(c) Nine other verbs caused  $6\frac{1}{2}$  % of *all the errors*.

(d) If children could be taught to use correctly the past tense and perfect participle of thirteen verbs, *one-sixth of all the errors made by these children* could be eliminated.

An analysis of the common errors in the speech of all school children anywhere would probably result in figures very similar to those that have been quoted. That is, about half the errors would be found to be those of verb forms, and a half of this half would be the result of misusing the forms of the past tense and the past participle. The preponderance of verb-errors is readily explained by the much more frequent use of the verb than of the other words open to misuse — like the pronoun and the adverb. The proportion of errors in the other items of the analysis would in all probability be found to approximate very closely that revealed by the investigation here described. Human nature is much the same everywhere, and it has no more common expression than the manner in which it abuses the English language.

### *Formal Language Games*

One of the most successful means of correcting bad language forms in the primary grades and establishing right habits of speech is the formal language game. In these the child is unconscious of the ultimate aim of the teacher, though fully aware of the fact that a certain form must be used in order that the game be won. The teacher, however, is more successful with results than if she were to explain her intentions. She secures the functioning of language at the very time it is needed. The drill is not something



wholly apart. It is interesting, because of the activity. Repetition is called forth by a natural situation, and the desired expression is in the focus of the child's attention.

A few games that have proved very successful in the classroom are given as illustrations of the idea. The resourceful teacher will invent as many more as she will need.

### DRILL 1

#### *Throw, Threw — Catch, Caught*

Have two lines of pupils standing opposite each other.

Consider children in their seats as spectators.

One child throws the ball to the opposite, and says:

"I throw the ball." (or) "I am throwing the ball."

The other child says:

"I catch the ball." (or) "I am catching the ball."

Ask child in seat: "What did he do?"

"He threw the ball."

"He caught the ball."

"He dropped the ball."

} Spectators tell this.

The teacher throws the ball, and asks:

"What am I doing?"

"What did I do?"

### DRILL 2

#### *"It Isn't"*

Leader. "I've thought of a word that rhymes with door."

Jimmie. "Is it part of any apple?"

Leader. "No, it isn't 'core.'"

Ethel. "Is it what I did to my dress?"

Leader. "No, it isn't 'tore.'"

Jean. "Is it what lions do?"

Leader. "Yes, it is 'roar.'"

Now Jean, the successful, "thinks of a word" and the guessing continues by definitions.

This game never fails to give pleasure. Ideas struggle for expression in comprehensible definitions and the rhythmic formula, "No, it isn't . . .," repeated again and again makes the correct verb form pleasantly familiar.

## DRILL 3

## Drill on Use of "Saw"

Place a number of objects on teacher's desk.

Have a row of children pass the desk, and tell what they saw.

Limit them to the number of objects they must tell, by saying:

"You may tell two objects."

"You may tell three objects."

The next child may tell four objects.

Look out for careful placing of "and."

"I saw a cap." (Not "sorra cap.")

"I saw a cap *and* a book."

"I saw a book, a marble, a top *and* a ball."

In like manner

*take* — *took*

*find* — *found*

*bring to me* — *brought*

## DRILL 4

## Polite Use of "I"

Teacher. "Mary and Alice may walk across the room."

Teacher. "Mary, tell me what you and Alice did."

Mary. "Me and Alice walked across the room."

Alice. "I and Mary walked across the room."

Teacher. "The polite way is to name Mary first."

Alice. "Mary and I walked across the room."

Teacher. "Alice told me very nicely. Mary, you tell me."

Other corrections may be taken up in this way.

## DRILL 5

*It is I. It is He. It is She*

A child stands in the corner blindfolded. Another pupil stands beside him not blindfolded. A third child steps up and taps the first one on the back. Number one says, "Who is it?" The child who did the tapping says, "It is I." The blindfolded pupil then gives the name of the child he thinks it is. If he guesses correctly, the pupil not blindfolded says, "It is he," or "It is she." If not, he says, "It is not she," or "It is not he." "It is not Miss . . ."

## DRILL 6

Drill on: "*I seen it*"; "*he done it*"; "*me and him*"; "*I got it off him*"; etc.

Hold up a book or pencil. Ask these questions of different pupils: "What do you see?" "What did he see?" "What has he seen?" "What have they seen?" "What did they see?" The answers to these questions and many more of the same type will call for the correct use of *see*, *saw*, *seen*.

"What did John and you see?" "What did he and you see?" These questions call for answers with the correct use of "*he and I*."

"Mary, get a ruler from Annie." "From whom did you get the ruler?" "From whom did Mary get the ruler?" This may be continued by calling on different children and making use of different objects. "Where did you get it?" "Where did I, he, she, we, they get it?" The answers to questions of this sort will teach the children to use *from* instead of *off*.

## DRILL 7

Drill on "*I haven't any*," or "*I have no*"

"You may tell me about some things which you haven't."

"If you haven't a book, how would you tell me?"

"I haven't any book."

"Tell it another way."

"I have no book."

"I haven't any ink."

"I haven't any pen."

"I haven't a paper."

"I haven't a crayola."

"I have no ink."

"I have no pen."

"I have no paper."

"I have no crayola."

### DRILL 8

#### *Correct Verb Forms*

"John, go to the closet, get a ruler, and put it on Mary's desk."

"Tell me what you did."

"I *went* to the closet, *got* a ruler, and *put* it on Mary's desk."

"Mary, go to my desk, get two pencils, an eraser, and a key, and give them to Miss . . ."

"Tell me what you did."

"I *went* to your desk, *got* two pencils, an eraser, and a key, and gave them to Miss . . ."

### DRILL 9

Drill on "*May I?*" for "*Can I?*"

Drill on wrong use of "*Please.*"

"Miss . . ., may I change my seat?"

"Miss . . ., may I go home at eleven o'clock?"

"Miss . . ., may I have another paper?"

"Miss . . ., may I have a book?"

"Miss . . ., may I leave the room?"

"Miss . . ., may I close the window?"

### DRILL 10

#### Use of "*Isn't*"

Have a list of words on board. A child steps out of the room, while one of the class goes to the board and selects a word. Then

the first child comes in, and points to the word he thinks the boy selected, and asks:

"Is it *every*?"

"No, it isn't *every*."

"Yes, it is *every*."

Make use of this game to fix the pronunciation of troublesome words and phrases in their minds, such as three, two, from, against, through, I had to, this afternoon, etc.

### DRILL 11

#### Game of Fortune Telling. — Correct Use of "*Saw*"

To play this game the class should be divided into fortune seekers and fortune tellers. On the teacher's desk should be many pieces of paper, each having a picture on the under side; the upper side should be blank.

Each fortune seeker in turn should go to the desk, take a paper, peep at the under side, and then, turning to a fortune teller, say what he saw. The fortune teller should at once tell the seeker's fortune. Thus: If a fortune seeker should say, "I saw a ship," the fortune teller should say, "You will be a sailor."

The following suggestions will help in the beginning, but the teacher and pupils should be able to think of other pictures and fortunes.

"I saw a club."

"You will be a policeman."

"I saw a hat."

"You will be a milliner."

"I saw a ladder."

"You will be a fireman."

"I saw an automobile."

"You will be a chauffeur."

### DRILL 12

#### A Group of Similar Games

Game 1. This game is like a spelling match. The teacher gives out the following words, one by one:

a bubble

a tulip

a riddle

a potato

a whistle

a wagon

a lesson	a picture	a kite
a bean bag	a ball	a flag
a horn	a leaf	an answer

The pupil whose turn it is, should reply instantly, choosing the most fitting answer from the following sentences. It is a failure to hesitate or to give the wrong answer :

I grew it	I blew it	I flew it
I threw it	I drew it	I knew it

Game 2. For another game, the teacher may give out the same words, and the pupil whose turn it is may respond instantly with one of the following questions :

“Have you ever known one?”

“Have you ever blown one?”

“Have you ever shown one?”

“Have you ever flown one?”

“Have you ever thrown one?”

“Have you ever grown one?”

Game 3. Make up a similar one for the class to play, using these words :

bought	caught
thought	taught
fought	brought

Game 4. A similar game may be made, using the following sentences, only there will be no rhyming words in it :

I saw it.	I ate it.	I said it.
I did it.	I lost it.	I showed it.
I chose it.	I took it.	I strung it.
I wrote it.	I gave it.	I spun it.
I broke it.	I sang it.	I hid it.
I tore it.	I shook it.	I bit it.
I wore it.	I swung it.	I wove it.
I stuck it.	I rang it.	
I drove it.	I dug it.	



## DRILL 13

Use of "*Doesn't*"

"Tell me some things your mother doesn't do; your father; your teacher; a squirrel; a robin."

"My mother doesn't talk English."

"My mother doesn't work in the mill."

"My mother doesn't start the fire."

"My mother doesn't chop wood."

"My mother doesn't like dirty books."

## APPENDIX III

## STANDARD LETTER FORMS

Adopted for Use in the Boston Public Schools upon the Recommendation of the  
Committee on Standards in English

## THE FRIENDLY LETTER

316 Summit Street,  
Pomona, Cal.,  
September 2, 1913.

Dear Marion,

Mother and I reached home yesterday after our visit of three months in the East. Although we had a pleasant time with our relatives in Maine and Massachusetts, we are glad to be at home once more.

The peaches and plums are ripe now, and we spend all day on the ranch helping the men gather the crop. I wish that you could be here to help eat our peaches, but I suppose you are enjoying your good Massachusetts apples.

Give my love to your mother and write soon.

Your loving friend,

Helen Garland.

## THE BUSINESS LETTER

321 Beacon Street,  
Boston, Mass.,  
January 20, 1914.

Charles Lowell & Company,  
36 State Street,  
Boston, Mass.

Dear Sirs :

In reply to your advertisement in today's "Herald" for a clerk in your office, I wish to submit my application.

I am fourteen years of age and am a graduate of the Prospect School. My report card shows my standing in arithmetic and spelling. This letter is a specimen of my handwriting.

I refer to Mr: John L. Stevens, the principal of the Prospect School, and to Rev. George Chase, 25 Wilson Road, Boston.

Trusting that you will consider my application favorably, I am,

Respectfully yours,

Richard H. Williams.

**Arrangement of Letter.**

The heading should be at least one inch from the top of the paper.

The heading and also the complimentary close should begin near the middle of the line.

Each line after the first in the heading and in the complimentary close should begin a little farther to the right than the preceding line.

There should be a margin of one half-inch on the left side of the note paper.

A paragraph margin should be twice the regular margin.

The complimentary close should begin with a capital and should be followed by a comma.

**Model Form for Addressing Envelope.**

Miss Marion L. Brown,  
14 Prospect Street,  
Reading, Mass.

Charles Lowell & Company,  
36 State Street,  
Boston, Mass.

**Directions for Envelope.**

1. Use ink in addressing letters or other mail matter.
2. Write plainly the name of the person addressed, street and number, post office and state.
3. Place your name and address in the upper left-hand corner of the envelope or package.
4. The name of the person addressed should be written in about the middle of the envelope and with about as much space at the right as at the left, and each following line of the superscription should begin an even distance at the right of the preceding line.

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